
CHURCH IN WORLD

THE STORY OF
THE NORTH AMERICAN INTERSEMINARY CONFERENCE



EDWARD F. OUELLETTE

BR
115
WG
088
1947

CHURCH IN WORLD

THE STORY OF
THE NORTH AMERICAN INTERSEMINARY CONFERENCE



EDWARD F. OUELLETTE

Price \$1.00

Published 1947, by
THE INTERSEMINARY MOVEMENT
347 Madison Avenue
New York 17, N. Y.

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Preface	5
1. Oxford 1947	8
2. The Dimensions of Man's Disorder	13
3. "All Real Life is Meeting"	29
4. The Strategy of Penetration	46
5. "Redemption Draweth Nigh"	57
Appendixes	68

FOREWORD

When plans were made for the North American Interseminary Conference, held at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, June 11-18, 1947, it was unanimously agreed to issue the official report in the form of an interpretative account. While this should be based on complete factual data regarding the conference and should be strictly true to its proceedings, it should not, according to the plan, be a simple verbatim account of speeches made and statistical report of people present. It should be rather a portrait of the whole event, showing in the spiritual perspective of the conference itself, what actually transpired. Moreover, it was decided that this should be the work of a single author.

Church In World is the result. Although every facility was provided for Mr. Ouellette at the conference, it should be noted that manuscripts of the addresses were not for the most part available, and that the record of them here is based largely on notes taken at the time of delivery. The method used in reporting the addresses on the last section of the conference, on the general subject of the vocation of the minister, reveals the freedom which all are agreed was necessary in capturing accurately the spirit of the meeting. It is in this connection appropriate to record the hearty appreciation of the Interseminary Committee to Mr. Ouellette not only for the faithfulness of his record, but also for the penetration with which he has grasped the spirit of the conference, and the imagination with which he has set forth its record.

For the Interseminary Committee:

HENRY P. VAN DUSEN, *Chairman*

ROBERT S. BILHEIMER, *Executive Secretary*

PREFACE

THE TASK of "rethinking missions" had begun long before the laymen's investigation which produced the Inquiry with that title. In our time we find the task fairly complete, with these conclusions.

H. C. Goerner
and student
panel

(1) The distinction between "Christian" lands and "pagan" lands is meaningless. What we now have is *Church in world*.

(2) The phrases "foreign missions," "home missions," and "local evangelism" are no more than expedients. The phrase now is "the world mission of the Church."

(3) The separation between "home base" and "mission field" no longer has any meaning. If there is any distinction we can say no more and no less than "older churches" and "younger churches." Both "generations" of churches are manifestations of *Church in world*.

(4) The missionary movement is now a two way process. The Church in each part has an evangel to proclaim to the world in every part. We now have *Church in world*.

(5) The need for missionaries and finance to flow from the West to the East is still great, but not because of any superiority of the West. The need is only to effect a more even distribution of the resources of the money and leadership of the world Church.

(6) The missionaries from the West must go to the East as fellow Christians, going, in the interest of Christian brotherhood, to serve Jesus Christ at an insufficiently staffed point of *Church in world*.

(7) The fulfillment of the task of the future depends upon an overall strategy, calling for a redistribution of the total resources of *Church in world* according to the need of *Church in world*.

With these conclusions clearly in mind as guides for the future, we may well ask the question: How ecumenical is the Church? With "ecumenical" meaning universal, world-wide, unified, possessed of unity, we may well wonder if what we have is *Church in world*?

In the United States of America \$400 million is spent on

local congregations while \$20 million goes to spread the Gospel. With a comparative saturation of ministers in the United States, fifty-six persons in each hundred acknowledge church membership. In India, with three times the population, two in each hundred are claimed for Christianity, with only 2400 ministers to proclaim the Gospel. In China the proportion is still less. Do we have *Church in world*? How ecumenical is the Church? And how ecumenical is the minister, burdened with the sins of division but avoiding the unreached world?

A quick look at the living world Church points up the necessity for the distribution of resources according to need. In *Mexico* the Church needs missionaries to complete the partial job already done with which the Roman Church rests completely satisfied. Minds must be set free, under God. In *Europe* the Church knows better than in America the meaning of sacrifice, but she needs relief and at some points a reconception of her mission to the world. In the *Philippines* the native independent Church needs spiritual encouragement and cooperation. In *China* the indigeneous Church flowers with its own unique beauty, needing advance on a solid front, making incomprehensible mere denominational representatives from the western world. In *India*, the Church is firmly enmeshed in Western civilization, needing trust in the civilization of another people, and missionaries who through their knowledge have not lost the evangelical urge.

This Church, with all its needs—these and many more—have been given a Great Commission. It is a commission which means nothing more nor less than the implementation of "Thy Kingdom Come" which is the same as "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." This is the timeless command for all Christians, but it comes with special force to us. We are seeing the emergence of the ecumenical Church which from one viewpoint provides the instrument to implement the Great Commission. The call to the ecumenical reformation is more daring than the great call of a generation ago—"The Evangelization of the world in this generation"—for we are called to achieve the unity of the Church, and to fulfill its world-wide mission. This is ecumenical.

menicity, nothing less than "to make disciples of all nations, and to teach them all. . . ." It is with this imperative that the conference met.

Oxford 1947 met to confront no parochial problem. Both man's disorder and God's design had world dimensions and world implications. Having tried to apprehend the meaning and scope and responsibility of *Church in America* in preparation for the conference, the delegates met together to lift their eyes and minds to apprehend the meaning and scope and responsibility of *Church in world*.

1.

OXFORD 1947

WITH "OXFORD 1947" already in session at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, it was reported that *Time* magazine telegraphed its correspondent as follows: "Watch Miami. Interseminary Movement Conference. There may be an explosion. Let us know."

651 theological students from 110 schools and 45 communions, ministers and pre-ministers, including 69 top-flight leaders, were meeting together in the North American Interseminary Conference. Students from the United States and Canada were present, with representation also from 13 other countries. It was the first meeting of its kind ever to be held; three years of intensive preparation had preceded it. This preparation, including the five volumes of the "Interseminary Series"¹ and numerous visits and regional meetings, focused upon the theme of the conference, "Man's Disorder and God's Design." The conference schedule reflected the preparation. In this combination of theme and persons, what looked explosive? Even if the *Time* writer could detect no awesome roar and could photograph no boiling column of dust and smoke, did something like atomic fission take place? Did Oxford 1947 put persons and world and Gospel in such a relationship that some elemental change took place? What happened at Miami where for a moment the world could see a "concretion" of the ecumenical reformation?

Perhaps a deep dip into the conference mind on the day before departure will supply part of the answer. Listen. Does this not sound like an explosion of significance?

One delegate wrote: I sensed "the one goal breaking through the many schools of thought." Another felt "the power of the community built up in the discussion groups and in the conference as a whole." Another was "amazed at the basic unity we have when we really understand each other. But it takes moved by an impelling missionary spirit which before this con-

1. See Appendix IV, p. 73.

hours of talking!" Still another said: "I am tremendously ference I would have categorically denied."

Many noted briefly their awareness of having shared in and seen something new under the sun: "Actual ecumenicity!" "The incarnation of ecumenicity in one place and time." "The fact of the conference itself is remarkable." "Before, I thought ecumenicity a good thing generally. Now I know it is a good thing specifically." "Here we sensed the actual realization of the ecumenical goal as possible, rather than in theory alone." "It has been almost too successful. Let's not get drunk with it."

One described the experience in power terms: there was "a deep and moving sense of unity which will not be felt in its full force for twenty years. . . . The conference is present potential power in the life of every minister . . . strong enough to become kinetic power as we go back to our parishes." Another added: "I cannot go back to my school and work without seeing it in the larger perspective of this conference."

Who can measure the ultimate power of a changed life? This delegate sensed it in these words: "The conference has set in motion ideas and determinations that will find expression in countless ways and places." Explosion at Miami? Exactly. In fact, the explosion started a chain reaction, whose end is unknown. Oxford 1947 brought about a fundamental fission, rearranging the components of an unknown number of lives, releasing an unknown quantity of power.

Process no secret

The explosion was no accident. It did not just happen. Can we make it happen again? Who has the "know-how"?

Answers are easy. Under proper conditions, it will happen every time. The know-how is no secret. The Interseminary Movement simply applied a technique as old as human nature: bring persons face to face with other persons, conditions, ideas, in a setting of worship, and new light and power will break forth. The conference followed this rule in at least four ways, setting up a number of face-to-face situations inside one great big face-to-face experience seven days long.

Student after student spoke of the whole conference as one

total experience, with the separate experiences merged into the total impact. Listen to their own words: "A mountain-top experience; just what I needed." "Greatest event of my seminary career." "One of the most significant experiences of my life." "Most stimulating experience of my life." The conference was not just another conference; it was an *experience*, an experience with duration, a time-exposure, a confrontation.

Confrontation with man's disorder

Ten major addresses in three evenings and two mornings, all on the sickness and mess man has made of his world, burned in the depth and dimensions of our disordered society. There was no sparing of the extent to which the sickness of the social structure has infected the very churches represented by the 110 different schools. There was no glossing over of the depth to which secular cultural forces has penetrated, cutting the nerve of action.

By Friday night, three days after the conference had opened, 600 seminarians were ready to cry "uncle." The heat was on; this was deep therapy. Things were stirring down under surface calm. Thirty evening discussion groups, meeting throughout the conference, made sure that the heat was brought to a focus in individual lives, lives from widely divergent backgrounds.

Confrontation with each other

These small groups brought persons face to face with each other. Listen to what happened: "Erased my suspicion concerning other beliefs." "Basis for working is listening to the other fellow. Understanding comes first. Everything else follows." "Frankness with which differences have been aired . . . making us all conscious of our basic unity in thinking and spirit." "The discussion groups were the soul of the conference." "We learned to respect each other as Christians . . . I find my prejudices gone." "I now know each denomination's contribution, but the inadequacy of each denomination by itself."

Confrontation with God's design

Five 100 minute sessions of study of passages from the Bible put the varied members of the discussion groups face to face

with some facts behind the facts of man's disorder. Some for the first time had a long look at what man really is, a creature with Godlikeness, an individual who cannot live alone, or save himself. Four addresses on the Gospel let the whole conference see that God's design has a future as well as a present and a past.

What is the minister called upon to do in the midst of the sickness and disorder? Living examples of men with "practical idealism" balanced the "pessimistic analysis," stirring some delegates to new depths: "What X actually *did* about race made an indelible impression. I shall never be the same." The discussion groups helped others rearrange fundamental ideas and attitudes into a new sense of commitment to the total task, the "common cause," through the medium of the One Church, resting on the one foundation, Jesus Christ.

Examining the picture

Taking another look at what happened at Oxford 1947, we may sum it up in seven propositions:

(1) An experience takes on depth and meaning in a context, against a larger background. Many of the separate experiences at Oxford were quite notable, but set in the midst of all the rest, this one or that one becomes the "high point" and carries the compulsion of the whole.

(2) There is actually a new reformation taking place, an ecumenical reformation. It has happened. It is happening. Oxford 1947 is this reformation "in focus" for a moment.

(3) This new reformation is based on conversion. Individuals need to be redeemed from the "scandal of division."

(4) Conversion is based on conviction, conviction of the sin and shame of divisiveness, conviction of the reality of Christian unity.

(5) This reformation begins right where you live. It expresses itself in the home town in the home church amongst the home folks.

(6) Christian unity emerges in searching fellowships like the discussion groups which were the heart of the conference.

(7) The power released is not man's power, but God's.

Yes, there was an explosion at Miami. The full force of it will not be spent for a generation. Like Oxford 1937, Oxford 1947 now is history. Oxford 1947 takes its place as an item of human experience. For many years it marks a turning point, a crisis, a watershed. For some, life is dated: before Oxford; after Oxford. For all who shared the total experience, life and work are different; something new has been added, a new dimension. At this distance, recollected in tranquility, what remains to sustain and direct us in the now, this side of Oxford?

2.

THE DIMENSIONS OF MAN'S DISORDER

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

A VOICE LIKE thunder echoing from the pages of the Old Testament dominated the setting of "Oxford 1947." Within the vast stage bounded by heaven and earth, blessing and cursing, life and death, a spotlight plays back and forth across man's disorder revealing it fully in its total dimensions.

There is no escape. There is no line to cross after which the experience is all over. We are plunged into an "experience in depth." This is confrontation with duration.

The deeper tides

Man is distinguished by his ability to deceive himself. Here we may try but we cannot. Man hates to look steadily at unpleasant truths. Here we must. Man always reaches for the rose-colored glasses. Here there are no glasses. Our eyes may blink but the light does not waver. Before us lies the whole scene, the predicament of modern civilization. Later, we are to see it all again, from different angles, with other, deeper shadows.

Our disordered world seen in all its vast dimensions, seen "steadily and whole," reaching even into the citadel of the churches, strikes something like terror to the heart. We scramble to use our vantage point of spectators, our hemispheric separateness; to try to ignore, briefly, the crisis engulfing us, the three-fold crisis plainly visible in Western Europe—physical, psychological, moral and spiritual. "Unproductive congregations" made up of a restricted class pay high prices to skillful leaders to shield them from the necessity of facing the world with all its ugliness and sickness and pain and tragedy.

However, no one any longer denies that something is the matter. This basic assumption of the conference reiterates the acknowledged presupposition of all of life. A generation ago man may have thought himself to be riding, a "cosmic escalator" on the smooth upward journey of inevitable progress.

Samuel
McCrae
Cavert

But not now! Now the thunder of Deuteronomy better expresses the mood. Book titles are symptoms: *The Fate of Man*, *Man's Dilemma*, *The Abolition of Man*, *Doom and Resurrection*.

Only a geographical accident makes it possible to ignore, briefly, the tidal wave of doom which has already engulfed western Europe. The *physical crisis* of hunger and suffering reduce the whole of life for millions to the stark struggle for survival. "How can I get one more slice of bread?" This is exceeded only by the *psychological crisis* of fear and despair inducing "a calamitous mood of lassitude and apathy, almost of desperation," because of the deep certainty that Western civilization is hanging in the balance. As if this were not enough, there is further the *spiritual and moral crisis*, recognizing nothing more ultimate than naked power, cynically denying all ethical standards, declaring that nothing gives any significance to life.

None of this is unique to post-war western Europe. Post-war western Europe simply illustrates the sickness of our civilization in its most virulent form. All of us are on the "Road to Buchenwald." Dr. Walter Marshall Horton has pointed out the sign posts:

- (1) Let faith go—keep the Christian ethic
- (2) Let the ethic go—keep custom and habit
- (3) Let custom and habit go—BUCHENWALD*

An eminent British educator (Sir Richard Livingstone) graphically describes our plight: "We are left with traditions and habits of conduct inherited from them, as the earth may for a time receive light from an extinct star," a star extinguished by scientific humanism, or secularism. Man has heard the Tempter, "Ye shall be as God." His eyes are opened. The "Te Deum" is supplanted by "Me Deum." Swinburne titles the anthem: "Glory to man in the highest, for man is the master of things."

The master? Rather the victim. Unlimited power in irre-

*He adds that secular education in America is well along this road. Secular education studies *about* the custom and the habit, having let go both the faith and the ethic.

sponsible hands brings man shudderingly near the literal end of his proud civilization. "A world with as many centers as there are human beings,—that is the cause of all the chaos and disintegration in the world of men." Glorious man as educator remains silent about God. "Claiming to avoid indoctrination (he) very effectively indoctrinates in the notion that God is negligible and Jesus Christ does not matter." "Faith in science has almost become the religion of the average American." H. G. Wells once proclaimed this boundless faith in universal education. Now he writes of "Mind at the End of Its Tether."

The key problems of our day are moral commitment and spiritual renewal. These secular education cannot produce. "Man is not good enough, not wise enough, to be entrusted with such power as science has given him."

Power in all its varied expressions, national, political, economic, social, dominate and threaten all of life. All tend to merge under the power of the State, after which it becomes a question whether a free society with free institutions is any longer possible. No longer can a man's conscience appeal to the consciences of other men. As slave of the State man is no longer responsible to God, and if not, he is no longer Man. Without a free society there can be no Church with any effective influence on civilization.

We may not say that the great civilizations of the East will act as a corrective to our Western illness, for where technology has penetrated, there has Western civilization gone also. Technology has unified all peoples into a single Great Society. (Toynbee) What happens to Western Civilization will happen—for good or ill—to humanity.

In all this there is one gleam of hope. Christianity is not bound to any particular culture. Rome, Medieval Europe, the Reformation—all were identified with Christianity. All have gone. The modern world is desperately ill. Christianity will either be a regenerating force within it or become the seed in some other field. For the Gospel is eternal. Humanity may be in the "City of Destruction" but there is a *social* Pilgrim's Progress out of that city toward a shining light and a distant wicket gate.

The conference is evidence that we stand at the threshold of a new reformation which will declare a *total* gospel, supplanting both the individual gospel and social gospel. This total Gospel will be addressed to the hidden, suppressed, unargued presuppositions of secular culture, reforming this culture with the introduction of Christian presuppositions.

The presuppositions of our culture have been exposed by Mannheim, Berdyaev, Maritain, and others in their books on the philosophy of civilization. The ills of the world which confront us are symptoms indicating the presence of these un-Christian premises. In the face of these symptoms the total Gospel declares two truths, one sad, one glorious. No civilization is secure except under certain conditions. But regeneration is always possible. In other words: the real possibility of the extinction of a civilization is matched with the real possibility of group redemption.

If the threshold on which we stand is but the most recent of many on which man has stood, how is our time different? The human stock is essentially unchanged. Human nature remains a compound of pride, sin, idealism, hope. Current manifestations of evil, war, vice, exploitation, cannot be attributed to human depravity. How then is our time different? Our *technics* differ. Francis Bacon ushered in a new era of technics, but that age came to an end August 6, 1945. *Our* technics have planetary power involving all humanity and requiring planetary strategy to deal with the awful new dimensions of perennial human problems.

The new technics pander further to human pride. As with all other technology, the self remains untouched. The new technics cannot unify us. For this we need either a great fear or a great devotion, one that is neither temporary or superficial. We are as naive as Lamech (Gen. 4) if we proceed on the assumption that the newest and biggest technic brings with it the good life. Ungoverned by the moral law, the new may be positively evil.

Those who seek escape from life dimly know the truth about these unargued assumptions. They know the idols of this world

for what they are. But how little joy escape provides. The places for fun (like the ads for perfume) give a rough indication of how much we need it. One by one the old gods go. Even youth, on whom we pin our faith, seems to get into the same old troubles. The common man turns out to be glorified mediocrity incapable of doing more than mirroring our condition. The poor man is as gullible and selfish as the rich. Western man has lost his faith in the old gods, and having no new ones seeks escape. It is good that the old gods go, but there are some bad results, for war, like alcohol, offers itself as one escape.

Ours is an open time. We stand poised, on the threshold. Before us lie idealism and cruelty, opportunity and danger. In such a time we have a chance to determine the outcome. The ministry becomes the one *practical* job in the world, without which the world would certainly go down to oblivion.

The social structure is sick. The spotlight shifts and narrows, revealing twisted political organizations and warped economic arrangements. These defects penetrate the churches which are part of the social structure. The spotlight shifts again and we see how sick the culture is. Thrashing about, it invokes the gods of secularism and racism, sometimes covertly, often openly, to assuage its fever. The false gods creep into the churches. Success and segregation replace the humble Christ and the whole congregation.

The social structures

Moving closer to the scene surveyed thus far, in order to examine the sickness manifest in the political and economic structure of our world, a brief statement of what health is must precede diagnosis. Christian standards for social health maintain (1) Individuality: every individual man is a creation of a loving God who cares enough to endow him with freedom to accept or reject His will; (2) Community: all men are equally creatures of God so that offenses against the neighbor become also offenses against both God and self; (3) Creation continues and God's providential power proceeds to judgment and redemption.

This faith is not a mere cult to be preserved, but rather a judgment to be pronounced and a redemption to be offered. Within it individuality and community are not complementary; often they oppose each other. But Christianity insists that both are part of the purpose of God. The Christian heaven is not Nirvana. The individual is exalted, not assimilated. (Nirvana: enough consciousness left to know that you are dead.) The Christian good society is illustrated by Schopenhauer's parable of the porcupines who stayed close enough to keep warm but not close enough to prick each other. Individuality and community balance each other like scales held in the hand of God.

These Christian standards of social health lead to a diagnosis of the sickness of prevalent economic and political structures.

Capitalism in theory exalts individuality but in practice betrays both the individual and the community. Actual result: freedom for the few; bondage for the many; little community. For such achievements as are advertised, capitalism no more deserves the credit than the woodpecker who was busily hammering the tree when it was split by a bolt of lightning. Despite its much vaunted plant capacity, capitalism has failed to meet the basic needs of one fourth of the population. The studies of the Twentieth Century Fund indicate that though production may be up 40 per cent by 1950, needs will still be 11½ per cent unmet. With an indifferent record, capitalism offers no plan, save a mystical reliance on luck, to avert a depression. Men who have seen the plant's capacity to produce will not tolerate the human misery of unmet need. All this is aggravated by the fact that capitalism professes to serve God as well as both the individual and the community. Rather it offers a travesty on freedom while it is callous to the demands of the community.

Marxism sees all this for what it is, but makes too simple a diagnosis offering a cure which is worse than the disease. In the guise of extending community, Marxism actually limits both the community and the individual.

Fascism also sees the sickness well but its cure is quack medicine, placing the hope for community in the myth of a superior

folk. Fascism perverts and denies both the individual and the community.

Democracy comes closest to the claim of social health, but its liberty and equality remain secular derivations of individuality and community, with an attempt to hold the two in balance with fraternity in place of God. Democracy needs its own economic forms to attain social health, dropping off its accidental association with capitalism in the U.S.A. and socialism in Great Britain.

Internationalism stresses the (not new) vision of One World but contains a fatal defect in its center: the nation takes the place of God. The United Nations organization emphasizes the *sovereign* equality of the member states. Even in America, all other values are easily assimilated to patriotism: "Don't kill a pedestrian; he might be a war worker." When the tension between the "nuclear" sovereign powers, Russia and the U.S.A., becomes great enough, we will have World War III. In the words of Secretary Marshall: "While the patient sinks, the doctors deliberate."

From a different point of view, a point of view which rejects *absolute* standards of Christian health for politics and economics, the scene looks enough different that we may gain genuine hope. "To say, 'No system is Christian,' comes as a shock to most laymen who are not accustomed to measure systems against perfection." It may well be true that we are in the midst of a revolution, but after the revolution things will not be *all* different; we will have simply a rearrangement of certain persistent elements. There is no need to believe "that civilization is at the point of death, or that it needs a major operation to survive." As between Spengler and Toynbee we may vote for Toynbee.

"We make too many assumptions about what people feel and do. We need a sounder history and a sounder anthropology." From this basis we may question not the facts of such an analysis as that prepared by John Bennett for the Conference of the World Council set for Amsterdam in 1948. But we may

question the fears he derives from the facts, the fear of an engulfing totalitarianism and the fear of total atomic destruction.

From this "sounder" basis we may attack the assumption of any "herd mentality" which is occasional rather than normal. And which is certainly not Christian. We may attack the pessimism expressed about man by such a writer as Paul Tillich, in *The Christian Answer* simply because God *can* work through man. And we may attack any declaration of a minimum for all as a Christian standard. "Three squares and a flop are not the rock of our salvation." We may attack notions like the "end of the frontier," the theory of the "mature economy" or the "over-ripe tomato" simply because there *are* new businesses springing up every day.

We may declare with Gooch and Lindsay that democracy, far from dead, is rooted in small religious groups who believed in the priesthood of all believers and man's right to speak and duty to listen. The conference technique is fundamentally Christian as it proceeds in the faith expressed by Cromwell: "The Lord is not the author of contradiction."

Researches in history and anthropology, like the symposium from Great Britain, "What Makes Children Fight," and "The Shoe Strike in Yankee City," show that human struggles root in (1) envy of possession, (2) rejection of "outsiders," (3) frustration. Systems which we here diagnose as sick if not dead simply exist to hold down envy and rejection and frustration till *people* can be cured. We must get the bitterness out of envy, help people to accept outsiders, and begin early on children to minimize frustrations.

The job lies with people. Ministers, busy with judgments, fail to help persons in tragic situations, "fail to realize the problem of an executive who must choose between two 'lousy' alternatives." New systems will have the same job to do. They will not be less "sick," only different.

The position of the churches

Moving to that part of the stage where the shifting spotlight shows up our churches huddling together, we see the laymen

Georgia (who, from one point of view, *are* the churches)
Harkness busy about his affairs. Through him, the contagion of a "sick" economics and sick politics passes to the Church. Upon him and his world the Church must make its impact, if any.

Sitting in church this layman's mind wanders to the things he cares about—his home, his wife's comfort, his children's education; his job and the deal he must put through tomorrow, the pressure on him to "get things done"; his country and how he loves it for the "opportunity" he had, which is there for anybody who is "willing to work," his country which must be "defended" though it may mess up his plans for his family. He doesn't need to pay much attention to the minister, for he has heard most of what he is saying "from his youth up," so he thinks about his lodge, "full of religion if people only lived up to it," and his service club, "one place where a man can be a man." He may think about the party his wife dragged him to and the cocktails he had to drink so as not to be a wet blanket.

When we say "the Church ought to . . ." we are saying that this man ought to. We tend to forget that this man is the creature of many forces more powerful than the preaching to which he gives indifferent attention. If the preaching becomes so prophetic and dynamic that it "gets through" to him, his mixed emotions might get in such a turmoil as to make it "tough" for the minister. We tend to forget that the minister is "free" in a way that few laymen ever can be, and that for a layman to share his minister's social views is the exception rather than the rule. Laymen have very little real freedom; they are decent men, but they are caught. So little of the force of the Gospel which should help mold if not control his life comes to him in language or thought forms that he can understand. Thus has the sickness of our society infected the Church.

The problem "is not mainly 'the Church against the world' or 'the world against the Church.' It is rather 'the world within the Church,' or, more accurately, two worlds within the Church. There is the world of the Christian gospel and its great tradition, carried for the most part by able and consecrated Chris-

tian ministers who are wearing out their lives in an almost futile effort to stem the tide of secularism. There is another world competing with this one—a world of business, politics, national security, family responsibilities and a multitude of things that a decent, well-meaning, kindly intentioned citizen must think about and give time and attention to. These two worlds must meet.”

The fate of everyone, ministers and laymen and their children’s children depends on getting these two worlds together.

This confrontation with the layman-who-is-the-Church gives a needed emphasis on the outer results of something we say glibly and take for granted: the Church is a human community. At the same time we must not forget what is equally true: the Church links us with God, the Church is part of the redemptive work of God, in the Church men may meet God. Being together in the Church, one may hope that the two worlds may *get* together. But neither of these presuppositions must eclipse the other. Yes, the Church is sick like the world, but the Church is the bearer of the redemptive message.”

Shifting the spotlight from the laymen busy with his thoughts to the message-bearing community, we come face to face with the fact that the freedom of this community depends on the existence of a certain kind of social structure. The community *can* live underground, and may thereby even find a new life, but it cannot be normally free except within a social structure which, like democracy, is “open,” allowing criticism. This freedom, to have meaning, depends on a social structure separating Church and state. There is real health in the American social structure.

It is true that the Church in Britain has freedom without separation, but such a social structure cannot be *planned*. Without a structure planned for freedom, thinking becomes sterile, and the question becomes one of the control of the Church by the state, or the control of the community through the Church by the state.

Nevertheless, this social structure, even at its best, levels

down the Church, which becomes as callous as any other employer and owner. It is not enough to declare for a minimum salary scale. The minimum must be actually brought closer to the maximum. Too much heavy spending goes for unproductive congregations. "It is within the power of the churches to set their own houses in order." (Cf. *The Churches Survey Their Task*, pages 90-91.)

Furthermore, the world's social divisions appear within this message-bearing community. The division called nationalism has become somewhat diminished as the American churches' reception of Niemoeller testifies. But racism! Here the words of the Church were never better, while the practice reveals involuntary segregation humiliating to the minority. With class distinctions, the Church as a whole exhibits a fairly good balance, but taken by denominations and congregations the picture is not so good. The articulate leadership represents primarily the comfortable middle class.

We may not blink the consequences. We cannot deny that fellowship is broken. We cannot ignore the fact that a mutual check is lacking with but one side of a social division represented in the worshipping community. Where not even the minister represents those absent, there is no cross fertilization of insights, and we have either a religion of escape or a religion of complacency.

The social structure not only presses down upon the churches but it defines for them some tasks, for it presses equally hard upon persons with fateful effect. "The continuous suggestion of the environment beats all exhortation." The message which this human community carries at its heart lays upon it the obligation to work alterations in a social structure which deforms persons. The message reminds the Church that it has no need "to be inhibited by a devout conservatism," that no social structure has divine sanction just because it is here.

Democracy permits this message to be uttered. With Eduard Heimann we may conclude that despite its defects "democracy is the best system because it knows it is not just."

Dominant forces

By now we have begun to apprehend the dimensions of the

crippling disorder which pervades the whole stage on which we play our parts. We have seen some things, if not for the first time, at least in a new light. We begin to be aware of a tautness on the faces of each other as we move in even the best circles, within or without the message-bearing community. The tautness is not the vital tension of the Christian life. It comes from the "dominant *contradictory* attitudes" of the secular (cut off from God) culture which have invaded our spirits. Few of these faces even glance at the churches huddled together. Nor do they look long at the (also taut) faces of those who call themselves Christians.

A sprightly *optimism* tugs against a deep *despair*. Lacking any significant sense of spiritual need, most anyone you meet will confess an inner emptiness and loneliness, asserting that "no one completely understands." Persistent attempts to look away from the evil of the world to more pleasant things, are hounded by the buried dread of World War III.

An *honest realism*, respecting science, wanting "practical" education and positive pleasures reveals itself even at odds with the *sentimental escapism* of patriotism and fraternal orders which unrealistically short circuit any facing of basic facts of human existence like sin and dependence. *Sociability*, an amiable gregariousness and shocking lack of privacy has its opposite in the delights of an irresponsible *individualism* saying, "Don't get me involved," the while it is hungry for a cause to give itself to.

The mind behind this taut exterior has had little or no encounter with authentic religion where sacrifice is a joy and theology is not sloppy and the Gospel is known for the radical, revolutionary thing it is. The communities which should exhibit this authentic religion are themselves taut and uneasy with these same dominant contradictory attitudes of secularism. They betray their uneasiness by their sloppiness or their militant intolerance. The part of the secular world that feels it has a message exhibits frenzied opposition. The far larger part, enervated by the strain, stands either indifferent or contemptuous.

Seeing the taut faces or each other, professing Christians come face to face with the fact they themselves are the reason for the opposition, the indifference, the contempt. Taking stock of themselves they may discern a lack of mental discipline ("Our graduate work is notably inferior.") and a lack of saintliness. ("Are we really a changed people?") Taking a second look at the indifferent and often contemptuous but decent folk sharing this disordered world they may note that secularism has its plus side. The realism, the initiative, the honesty, the tolerance, the positive joys of secularism cannot be denied. But where secularism has a plus, Christianity has a double plus! Professing Christians, with all their tautness, need to remember that what is back of them, not what they are, gives them their only claim to betterness.

Letting the light fall for a time on the churches again, from a slightly different angle, we become aware of a segregation which we remember was not absent among the taut faces which a few moments ago passed to and fro in the spotlight. Here again something from the disorder of man's world has invaded the church, for this segregation along racial lines denies brotherhood, and we come face to face with a question: "Is the western church going to be a reliable agency in the battle for brotherhood or against it?"

Our culture shows its ugliest face in racism, an attitude which, defined most explicitly and in its most vulgar form by Germany, has persisted in Europe, especially in Britain, for over 400 years: "God made high grade folks out of his limited, first-class material. Others are scrubs and runts." Forty-four million people in America live under this assumption.

Christianity and racism rose in the home of the Protestant Reformation. Christianity has operated in a "zone of consent" to racism, and the Christian Church is so infected with this aspect of our culture that, Catholic and Protestant, it remains the most systematically reactionary institution on this issue. "The segregated southern church operates to dam the tide of love. It is a blasphemy against God."

Letting our gaze rest on the actual facts, we Christians

should discern that on every front in the world we are morally outflanked. "The segregated Christian church has no chance to survive in the world of tomorrow. The unsegregated Church exists in the hearts and spirits of a few in the churches. But the Roman Catholic Church (white) can't win. And the Protestant Church (white) can't win."

The need for a strategy

Having come face to face with cultural forces of secularism and racism so potent that the church as an institution has failed to stand against them, it becomes useful to look closer to discover, if we can, the strategy by which these forces won their victory. "How has secularism given the Church an inferiority complex?"

In the first place, secularism recognizes the crisis of our time and gives its own highly competent and impressive analysis of it. It proceeds then to plausible secular solutions in which religious content and motive appear both unnecessary and irrelevant. Further, the mass dimensions of our life have aggravated the extent to which secular standards of value infect the institution of the church. Besides, social and community services, and especially education with its original intent to neutralize sects, have passed under the domination of secular ideas, and seem to function very well. Religion is definitely an "extra." The Protestant churches, *drifting without pattern*, are crowded into a corner, as witness the confused judgments of prominent Protestant laymen regarding external and internal national strife. Finally, secularism has its own idealism, a rootless, "cut-flower" type of idealism, but plausible and "practical" none-the-less. This results in a supercilious attitude more baffling than hostility. The whole strategy of secular penetration, conscious or unconscious, is founded on the presupposition that "religion is irrelevant."

With this strategy laid bare, we begin to see in a clearer light some of the particular effects on churches. On one side, Christian effectiveness is judged by secular standards. The "successful" business man is the sought-for-church trustee. The best of secular idealism receives church sanction, and the church "goes along" with the Rotary Club and the plans for the so-

ciety wedding. On the other side is an opposite reaction. The Church will "go along" with nothing. Doctrinal orthodoxy says "come out from among them" and be saved by keeping "unspotted from the world." Secularism is declared out of bounds, and the forbidden becomes the preoccupation of the many. Again secularism is the determining factor.

Intermixed as are the world and the Church, we fail to realize that the secular community is as difficult to reach as any "foreign" or "pagan" community into which missionaries might go, demanding a clear cut strategy. The Church in Scotland recently discovered this "fact" and one result is the Iona Community which quite frankly starts in to rebuild the *whole* of life. Here is one strategy which opens a way for consecrated, trained men who might otherwise "burn out" or "wilt" or yield to panic and hysteria, or a denial of faith, as they confront the secular community. The development of a sound strategy through which the total Gospel may make its impact on the world is the first imperative of the Church in relation to secularism.

With the proud world now somewhat humbled, and turning toward the Church, the question is put sharply. Has the Church any answer?

Withdrawing once again from these probing and disturbing close-ups of our disordered world, we may seek to sort them out, and understand in new depth the character of our crisis.

Buell
Gallagher

Cutting across the whole scene we see the use of atomic energy, matched in importance only by man's discovery of fire. Man appropriates this new cosmic power only with pain and at a price.

In the total picture of our disordered Western civilization we can discern interwoven the Hebrew and the Greek tradition, Adam and Prometheus. Time was when the two were bound together as Thomas Aquinas linked knowledge and righteousness. But since the Enlightenment, Adam has been eclipsed by Prometheus. With atomic energy, Prometheus' proudest achievement, put in robot planes, even rational control is cut off. If Prometheus does not rejoin Adam, the robot will escape,

for knowledge itself has lost control. Knowledge is no longer power unless it be moral power.

Our crisis has this aspect of hopelessness. Some, failing to sense the depth of man's disorder, still say that righteousness must prove itself, that Adam must learn to speak Greek. But Prometheus himself has lost hope; in knowledge there has been no peace. Yet in the hopelessness of knowledge itself lies a basic hope. Both Prometheus and Adam, both our knowledge and our morality, must pay a price. Moralizing is not enough for the crisis of the age; neither will increased knowledge solve our moral problems. At least four "cherished goods" must go as a minimum price of survival.

- (1) The sovereign power to make war
- (2) White supremacy, everywhere, even in church
- (3) Economic exploitation
- (4) Acceptance of secular idealism as sufficient

Does this seem too high a price? Can we survive *without* these familiar supports? The questions are irrelevant. This price must be paid, now. With God's power we may pay it. We may not be successful, but this act will be the beginning of the completion of the new reformation.

Look and look again. The image of the disordered world assails your eyes. The shifting shaft of light plays for you upon the pages of life. You confront without escape what man has made of his world. This experience with duration, this cluster of experiences of confrontation, this time exposure of the human spirit to things as they are, burns deep. We want to cry out, "Stop; enough." We do cry out, "Christ, have mercy."

For we are looking in a mirror! At ourselves! We have seen ourselves as human beings, as citizens, as employers and employees, as ministers leading in the worship of false gods.

3.

"ALL REAL LIFE IS MEETING"

⁶⁶THE DISCUSSIONS GROUPS are the heart of the conference." This assertion, made again and again as Oxford 1947 opened and progressed, was received by leaders and delegates alike with some diffidence if not articulate denial. "Why take time from platform speakers to meet in small groups for Bible study, or even for discussion of the speeches, which probably aren't remembered very well anyway?" Over against this "evidence to the contrary," the assertion came again and again, like the declaration of an article of faith, "The discussion groups are the heart of the North American Interseminary Conference."

It has been well said that faith is not so much believing something in spite of the evidence, as acting in a certain way regardless of the consequences. Oxford 1947, like Amsterdam 1939, and Oslo 1947, was projected in the faith that the discussion group would prove to be heart of the conference. The impressive array of platform speakers was enlisted to provide background for the face to face discussions of persons gathered in small groups. The groups continued to meet through its seven days despite the brilliance of the platform speakers and the pale light, by contrast and actually, which emanated from the hours spent in discussion. The plans for Oxford 1947 were an act. The conference itself was an act. The act was a declaration of faith that "all real life is meeting."

On this faith not only Oxford 1947, but also all human acts in the direction of the ecumenical reformation, find foundation. It is not surprising to discover that its briefest expression in English comes from the pen of Dr. J. H. Oldham, in two supplements to the *Christian News-Letter*, No. 112, "All Real Life is Meeting," and No. 281, "Life as Dialogue." The discernment that "All Real Life is Meeting"

marked a watershed between a world that by surrendering itself too exclusively to one way of thinking has in it the sentence of death, and a new world that is struggling to the birth and has the secret of genuine renewal. The realization

of the crucial significance of the relations between persons, and of the fundamentally social nature of reality is the necessary saving corrective of the dominance of our age by the scientific way of thinking, the results of which, as we now know, may involve us in universal destruction, and by the technical mastery of things, which threatens man with the no less serious fate of dehumanization.¹

Man, to be man, must live fully in three living relationships—with the world and things, with other persons, and with what the believer calls God. "The essence of *human* life is what *happens* between man and man. . . . The understanding of this 'between' is the great new task of thought to which our age is called."²

Oxford 1947 deliberately planned to set persons in these three living relationships—with the world, with the Gospel, and with each other. A durational experience of confrontation took place *vis a vis* man's disordered world in all its dimensions, the Gospel in its totality, and each other in discussion groups. Statistics compiled from questionnaires showed that the result justified the faith on which the conference was founded. Asked, among other things, to rate "Analysis of world conditions" (including Race), "Understanding of other denominations," and "Theology," in the order of greatest meaning, the second received by far the most firsts and fewest lasts. Despite the brilliance of the platform addresses of analysis, comment after comment indicated that what happened *between* persons in the discussion groups, whether arranged or informal, remained for them the most significant element in the total experience of Oxford 1947. In this relationship, in the "between," could be perceived the actual ecumenical reformation. Here was the *reality*. The faith found vindication. "All real life *is* meeting." The discussion groups *were* the heart of the Conference.

As a matter of fact, five types of "meeting" made up the

1. The *Christian News-Letter*, Supplement No. 281, p. 7. Dr. Oldham (who, it will be remembered, directed the World Conference on *Life and Work* at Oxford, England—1937) gives the essence of two books by Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, published in 1923, and *Between Man and Man*, published 1947. Those interested in "Church in World" will find a study of these supplements and these books a rewarding "meeting."

2. *Ibid.*, page 9.

elements of the total experience. In each, something happened in the "between." What happened constitutes the "new thing," the coming into being in individual lives of the ecumenical reformation, the realization of the meaning of "Church in World." Comment after comment of personal reaction to the conference as a whole revealed commitment to this "new thing." Upon this foundation will be reared in the world the Church that is to be. "I feel certain that the spirit of ecumenicity, as I have experienced it here, has made an impression which I can never forget. I am determined to *build* upon that spirit." "Here I have felt a deepening of commitment; a feeling of being a part of a whole."

It is this commitment which will "govern the church life of America for the next decade."

At Oxford, 600 ministers of tomorrow met (1) each other, face to face, in discussion groups, interest groups, informal groups. They came face to face with (2) the world in all its sickness and disorder. They were confronted by (3) God's Design in Bible study. They faced up to the implications of a (4) total Gospel. They heard anew (5) the call to go into *all* the world and bear witness to the Gospel, refashioning man's disorder after God's design.

Each of these "meetings" became known in what was, for many, its intensest form, in the discussion groups. Here the disorder, the design, the Gospel, and the task, successively entered into a living relationship demanding response of persons from widely separated backgrounds who also faced each other, and who, in closing periods of prayer, together came face to face with God the Father.

The meeting with each other

This sampling of response reported in this section indicates the character of the "new thing," the deepened understanding, the apprehension of the "present reality" of the ecumenical reformation. The sampling takes on added significance in view of the fact that 651 students and leaders representing 110 schools located in every part of the United States and eastern Canada, coming from forty-five denominational back-

grounds, had been carefully assigned to more than thirty groups averaging about twenty persons each. It was the unusual group which did not contain within itself a maximum spread both geographically and denominationally.

"I believe that we are learning to respect each other as Christians. We are now Jack, Tom, Bill, instead of Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian." "I find that my prejudices against other denominations have gone." "I am amazed at the basic unity we have when we understand each other. It takes hours of talking." "In a new sense it is ecumenical Church first, denomination second (because from a wide diversity of backgrounds we) freely and frankly faced theology and life within and beyond particular labels."

"The basis for working is to listen to the other fellow. Understanding is first. Everything else will follow." We came to the "realization that our differences are small . . . too small to separate us like they have." "The most notable fact was the sense of real unity." We sensed "one goal breaking through many schools of thought." "The discussion groups seemed the real stabilizing agent of the conference."

In the group "you could actually see minds opening and respect for persons of other points of view increasing." After this group experience, "Christian unity in America seems a much more feasible possibility." "Many obtained a sense of communicability which was not at first manifest." "By the end of the week, our one extremely high-church Anglican, two men who were rather new to orthodoxy, and our most devout friend from the pietistic group were ready to go ahead with the rest of us. They began to appreciate each other." "The 'neo-orthodox' discovered that the 'liberals' are not just sociologists but are genuinely concerned about the Gospel. And the 'liberals' discovered that the 'neo-orthodox' doctrine of man does not foreclose a place for the functions of the Church in society." Students from widely separated traditions "met in confession of the renewed sense of call to the ministry as it judged and condemned smallness of spirit and motive." "Even where differences were not a matter of vocabulary, there was a willing-

ness—more, there was an eagerness, to know what these differences really meant and if possible to resolve them.”

“We have become comrades in a common cause with Christ as the center and focus of our commitment.” “For the first time many of our students were really seeing their own particular tradition in the context of the whole Christian Church.” “We have given the Holy Spirit an opportunity to work amongst us, and it is evident that there have been results. The Christian Church needs more community of this kind.” “We had communion without Communion.”

There can be no doubt that this deliberate placing of distinct and unique persons face to face with each other in a relationship of address and response wrought in persons changes of unpredictable import. In this relationship a release of power takes place not unlike nuclear fission. Personalities reveal themselves to be fissionable material, each capable of starting a chain reaction. One delegate described his total experience as “a deep and moving sense of unity which will not be felt in its full force for twenty years. . . . A present potential power in the life of every minister . . . strong enough to become kinetic power as we go to our parishes.”

Here is evidence of God's power working “not through magic but through men” to bring about the new reformation. In the face to face meeting the new life became real. Out of the groping to give expression to this reality, new and dimly apprehended, this statement stands out.

“It seemed appropriate for our last meeting to speak from our hearts about the meaning of the conference for us. Our testimonials were at once cautious and sincere, hard-headed and moving, sincere and often humorous. Our progress from laughter to naked frankness, from light-hearted humor to mutual trust, suggest how rapidly our group had coalesced in a miniature community of Christian effort. With respect for each other we maintained our own integrity. With understanding for each other, we widened and deepened our resources. With real appreciation of each other, we sensed the fact of the ecumenical community more strongly than we sensed doctrinal differences. *The discussion group was for us the proper*

core of the conference. Each of us had interacted on the others; each of us had affected the life of the group; each of us had been affected by the life of the group; each of us felt a special affection for our short week of togetherness. The only fitting act of appreciation and of dedication found its expression in our concluding prayers."

The meeting with man's disorder

Judging by the explicit response, it is hard to tell whether this second meeting at Oxford really came off. In spite of the general reaction which named the speeches of analysis as the second most meaningful aspect of the total experience, the recorded results leave some doubt as to whether the total group really did hear and respond to the "challenge of our culture," the "word" addressed to them out of the vast disorder which is our sick, secular world.

By mid-conference, some disposition appeared asking that we have done with diagnosis and get on to cure. Then the failure to respond personally to the vast need of the world tended to make the conference itself the scapegoat: "The cure offered is unrelated to the disease." "The Gospel and the world as presented here passed right by each other."

Three explanations suggest themselves for this apparent failure to have a fruitful *meeting* at this point. They may be three aspects of one explanation. They point to a *meeting* which took place on a deeper level producing "new living insights" of more far-reaching significance than any quick cure for the sickness of our culture.

The delegate who responded bluntly that he had heard "nothing new" expressed the saturation with diagnosis which is the portion of most students. A feeling of despair: "We can't get our fingers on the real problem," describes another aspect of the mid-conference mood of those who, because of fear, fatigue, and frustration, went into mental hiding after ten speeches on the predicament of civilization and four discussion periods on the same theme and the deeper one of man's creaturely dilemma. A third explanation lay in the facade of a formula for individual salvation which effectively shielded some delegates from coming face to face with the sick world.

"The world is sick. So what! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved."

All these suggest the possibility that no *meeting* was *possible*; that the ministers of tomorrow and the sick world moved along on parallel tracks; that the sickness was "old stuff" because, in fact, all had it to some degree; that the sickness was normal and simple escape was the answer. In a word, there seemed to be no meeting on the level expected because, to a significant degree, the ministers of tomorrow *are a part of the problem instead of part of the answer*. This had been suggested when four addresses pointed to the effect on the churches of secularism, racism and the dislocated political and economic structure of society.

The *meeting* took place internally instead of externally. Instead of the conference representing the Church in an eternal struggle of the Church against the world, it was discovered that there *are* "two worlds within the Church." This relocation of the point of contact emerged for some as the most significant personal result of Oxford 1947. While some continued to speak of "a united front against the world," and a "common belief in the plight of society," the verbal *new* thing which appeared was a rash of attempts to define secularism, scientism, materialism. All these can be seen as efforts to bring to an end the sterile relationship of "confused seminarians" and "world" moving along on parallel tracks.

"Secularism is finding meaning in life without reference to the kind of God revealed in Jesus Christ." "Secularism is organization of life as if God did not exist." "Has secularism been attacked by the Church or merely brought into the Church?" Secularism is "technological wealth with spiritual bankruptcy; self-centeredness and technological power; lack of regard for moral law." "Secularism is 'spiritual hitch-hiking'—it tries to maintain the fruits of Christianity without the beliefs." "Secularism is Society or a way of life organized apart from or ignoring God. A subdivision of this is Materialism which involves concentration on the here and now." "Scientism is concerned with empirical knowledge and the self-sufficiency of science, a trust in the ability of scientists and of science to

control our destiny." "Secularism is a turning away of the inner will and self *from* God, to be remedied only by a simple conversion, a cell-group-inspired turning of the self *to* God."

Thus the "feeling of tension" with which the members of the groups came to the conference, because they had "given themselves to Christian service," and "had a sense of mission," found its locus not in a conflict between what they believed God would have men to be and the actual conditions of society so much as a conflict between what God meant *them* to be and what the world had made of *them*.

One leader whose group "seemed to get nowhere" speaks for many. "Our group was not able to go very far in giving a clear statement of the Christian ethic, and I feel that here a great deal of the weakness of our teaching and preaching is revealed." Another probes deeper with this comment: "The difficulty is the lack of historical, cultural, and sociological sense which made the term 'secular' for instance not easily comprehended. The concept of Western Civilization was rather empty of meaning. Very little understanding of the structures in society suggested inadequate training in the social sciences and little contemporary awareness of the lines of social struggle in the world."

The apparent fact is that "confused seminarians" failed to recognize a sick culture because they lacked adequate knowledge of the nature of culture or the nature of sickness. For the Interseminary Movement and the Church to come to grips with this fact raises the question of standpoint: Have these seminarians any standpoint from which they may view a civilization, sick or well? Part of the answer is anticipated in the third *meeting* which engaged the time of the Conference.

The meeting with the Word of God: Bible study

"The group heartily affirmed the study of the Bible as the first means of understanding God and his will for men. The Bible must be retained in its historical context and kept at the center of the Christian tradition."

At least four leaders underlined this positive response to the more than seven hours spent face to face with God's design

as revealed in the Bible. "Contrary, apparently, to the experience of most groups, our Bible studies were, I think, the most successful portions of our sessions. . . . The Bible studies had unity and direction. . . . The objective reference to the Bible prevented the discussion from being merely a meeting of opinions." "In many respects the Bible study period was of more value than the discussion period. . . . Its greater significance may be accounted for partially by the fact that the members were somewhat familiar with the Bible and showed an ability to root their discussion in Biblical theology." "Our Bible study made us feel we were dealing with the facts *behind* the facts of Man's disorder." "In the Bible study, though we were groping our way, the group was fused into the remarkable Christian unity which, more than any other thing, gave us the sense of God's power and providence."

From this high point of appreciation, reactions declined steeply. "We found the verses out of context no great handicap; the selections were used to indicate the great theological themes which run through the Bible." Others were embarrassed at being expected to spend so much time with Bible study. Others dutifully stayed with it. Others used the texts simply as a point of departure for the discussion of either the theme for the day or the most recent speeches. Others reacted according to the pattern which rejects completely what is called the "proof text" approach. Some quite frankly "departed from the outline completely" and discussed the speeches of the day. Elsewhere there was some inhibition because it was thought that "Bible study should be 'different': introspective, exegetical in a limited sense, and controversial."

Delegates knew themselves to be groping. Some detected that their leaders were groping too. Despite the many who sensed rather than grasped that man's dual nature as taught by the Bible had much to do with the "Predicament of Civilization," the bridge between would not bear much traffic. By the time the subject of "The Minister's Vocation" came up in Bible study, either group solidarity was such that the verses seemed to undergird a discussion of varying conceptions of the "call," or the group could say that "more often the

statement of our ideas seemed more imperative than the discovery of Biblical foundations, and leave the outline to talk about other things," feeling that the purpose of the conference was not betrayed. Others faithfully kept at a double task, finding value in each half: "In the morning our discussions were theological; in the evening we were more practical."

What shall we say of this rare, shy, embarrassed, tentative *meeting* with the Bible that took place at Oxford 1947? Do we find any "new" thing here, any "real life" of significance for the ecumenical reformation?

"Bible study is a revived discipline in many circles today. This was clear in the behavior of my group. There was always present the temptation to take the title of the particular study as a theme for discussion in which contributors began with 'Now I think' or 'It is my conviction,' rather than to use it as a jumping off place for an objective inquiry to try to discover what the Bible has to say about it. One of the most worthwhile achievements of our group was that all eventually became clear about this distinction; i.e., they learned what Bible study entails. . . . Many confessed to having seen new aspects of Biblical teaching for the first time."

For some who failed to have a meeting with the Bible, there was a meeting with *Bible study*. The issue of this meeting may itself be sufficient to empower the ecumenical reformation.

The meeting with the Gospel

As with man's disorder, the conference met the Gospel together. This corporate experience gained depth immediately by a period of Bible study of verses selected to reveal God's design for the redemption of man. What happens when six hundred seminarians together hear declared "the basic Gospel" and proceed in groups to respond to the Word of redemption addressed to them?

What was this Word of Good News?

No *man* can give a prescription that was given on the cross 2,000 years ago. "The basic Christian Gospel begins with the

T. C. Word of God Incarnate, in the Person of Jesus the
Chao Christ, speaking to man, calling man to repentance,
and giving him the power of faith if he is willing to
accept this Word of God for his own redemption and to see
in it also the redemption of his kind." Even Paul adjoined
philosophy after Mars Hill, and declared he would preach
only Christ.

This Gospel has undergone a human pilgrimage, through
philosophy, ethics, social action, morality, mysticism, and now
it is God in History. The point is, we have had in all this too
little confrontation: God speaking, man answering. The
encounter remains ever more important than the method. The
Gospel is that God has come into the world from beyond us,
God has become Incarnate, suffering in our behalf, effecting
our redemption. This fact is not to be interpreted in terms of
the rest of our knowledge.

In this encounter, in Jesus the Christ, God not only reveals
Himself; there is the further revelation that we are sinners.
This is something more than merely "missing the mark," a
concept which itself comes from the failure to encounter God.
The "sage" never meets God. Paul, the Pharisee, the Hebrew,
never encountered God. The sinner is incapable of meeting
God. But God confronts both the sage and the sinner, as
through Stephen and on the Damascus Road. God came in to
history, to give Himself to us.

At this point of meeting God and consciousness of sin, our
faith is a risk, a leap, an empowering experience, ever new in
every situation. This faith can never be fully explained; it can
only be accepted. Salvation comes by acceptance, acceptance
not only by the individual soul, but by the whole creation. "The
Kingdom is at hand."

The initiative is God's. Man must accept God's plan. For
his part, man can *will* what is right but he needs the gift of
grace to *do* what is right. Part of this grace is mediated through
the Kingdom for whose coming we pray, the Kingdom of right
relationships between God and man, and man and man. God
came to reconcile *the world* unto himself.

The Church is the "Incarnation in process" in a social way,

a community where the Kingdom of God dwells and becomes strategy and method. The Church should be a society within a society, a community within a community, a leaven within the lump of the world.

But without confrontation with the Word of God Incarnate in Jesus the Christ, without a *restored relationship*, there is no religion, only philosophy. Any explanation in terms of the known is impossible. If it is made, it is only words. The Gospel has no intellectual proof. The Gospel has only demonstration in life.

This Gospel is the good news that God has redeemed man from the power of evil. It is not good news about man, but good news about God for man. The Gospel is not a command to heroic action, but a declaration of something God *has done*, in history. Christian truth is not eternal truth as with philosophic idealism, but historical truth brimful of eternal significance.

The Gospel may be summed up in four affirmations which have meaning in the dismal human situation among the echoes of the bad news about man.

Man is a rebellious child of God. Man bears the image of God. He is fit for creation. He is meant to be God's man, with his living God-centered. But man's life is off center. Man believes God-likeness to be his glory, but he pursues the *false* gods of body-appetite, mind-culture, state, race, class; he worships the machine of his *own* creation, bearing his *own* image. Man's life off-center has produced anarchy in human affairs, emptiness of spirit and soul.

God became Man for man's salvation. The God-Man, Jesus Christ, is the central reality in human history. Though this may be a scandal to philosophic reason, we still have the good news about the perfect Man, a real man, who felt indignation, and mercy, and who regarded his own life as a divine mission. Man was so mad that the perfect Man was crucified. But God was present, reconciling the world unto Himself. Christ is risen, and history's destiny is in God's keeping. This world will continue until the full meaning of the Incarnation is fulfilled. Our

civilization may go, but not life. The possibilities of science and political folly will not thwart the purposes of God.

Through faith in Jesus Christ, redemption becomes actual. The "fear, fatigue, and frustration" which characterize man without God are overcome by total commitment to Jesus Christ. Fear becomes hope; fatigue gives way to power; frustration yields to God's purpose.

Redeemed men become members of a Divine Community, the Christian Church. And this despite contrary evidence in churches which are not worthy of re-born Christians. Part of the good news is that there *is* such a community. It exists. Where Christ is, there is the Church. The operation of the Holy Spirit is not confined to an ecclesiastical orbit. But the Church is an instrument of God's glory, unveiling His splendor, confronting the secular order, which is also under God. The task, then, is evangelization, creating new life through the power of the Gospel.

No lines of cold type can convey either the warmth and urgency of this conference "translation" of the eternal Gospel, or the humility of spirit with which it was declared. "Really terrific." "Just what I've been waiting for!" "If that was the 'answer' it went right by man's disorder and never touched it." With first reactions as widely separated as these, we must explore this meeting with the Gospel further in the groups.

"It was discouraging to have the group seem to accept in quite docile fashion the diagnosis of the platform speakers and then, on Saturday, turn to personal, individual evangelism as the *only* method or responsibility of the Church today!" "Salvation is for the individual, but through the individual, society can be saved also."

Not much hope for man's disorder in these responses. God's design for individuals slides right by the sick world. "A talk like that of Mackay had a lot of power behind it, but the prescription was not directed toward the sickness."

Not much hope in that reaction either. "Our discussion (of the Gospel) was mainly theological." Our discussion of the propagation of the Gospel was a "theological discussion of the Biblical doctrines of salvation." It is clear that for a number

"there was a theological vacuum at the heart of the Conference," a disturbing vacuum.

Accenting the disturbance rather than the vacuum we may note at least three points of tension. Here the "meeting" revealed some depths and caused some pain. Question: Are the ethical implications closely connected with the "heart of the Gospel." "Ministers have led people to think of religion as a matter of ethics, and do not live up to it themselves."

Question: Will not this stress on the Gospel as historical fact raise up yet another Authority? "We can get preoccupied with authority in such a way that it takes our thought from the whole process of being redeemed." After the decision to accept the Gospel, there remains much more to be done. "Salvation is immediate, but sanctification is a gradual thing." This personal experience is as much a ground of the Christian faith as an historical fact.

Question: Are we using theological words which have been battled around till they have lost their meaning; should we not find new words? Stick to Biblical words because people will only have to learn the Biblical meanings of the new words, or else the Gospel grows thin. We have laid too much emphasis upon the acceptance of a form of words.

In this meeting there was appreciation as well as the pain of these insights. "Those from India and China declare for us the Gospel in simple terms." "Our *instruction* in this Gospel fails because it does not follow this *witness* to the Gospel." The discussions elicited thoughtful self-examination. "I have been redeemed from a slovenly mind. I discovered that the Anglicans had a more orderly conception than I did."

As a group confronted the Gospel together, there was surprise "at the unanimity with which it found 'liberalism' in theology dead but neo-orthodoxy unsatisfactory, agreeing that the old doctrines of the Atonement, Person of Christ, etc. are necessary and tenable among the whole group." In this meeting with the Gospel, some delegates discovered their relationship not only to the ecumenical reformation but also to the ecumenical Church whose fragments they represented.

The meeting with the task: evangelism

Momentous historical possibilities underlined the presentation of the task of evangelism to seminarians from the West by a voice from East. "New nations coming to birth in India may lack new life. In the world it is a case of new life, or perish. Only the Gospel can offer new life. The proclamation of the Gospel is the task of evangelism."

This proclamation is not merely the preaching of an ethical gospel, nor the preaching of the value of the individual, nor the preaching of the knowledge of God. This Gospel is the proclamation of the pardon of sin: not a reform but a revival, not democracy but Christ.

In confrontation with the Gospel lies the secret. This confrontation yields not the knowledge of God but the power of God. This confrontation is inherent in the word "Father," signifying a relationship. India offers an example of the fact that no *movement* appears in human history without the Gospel. But there the second generation of missionaries brought an arm-chair, philosophic gospel which opened the door to syncretism, then secularism. India, basically religious, may know salvation through a new confrontation. As for America, the time has perhaps come for the Indian, basically religious, to come and preach religion to a mechanized people with broken homes, in order that "older churches" and "younger churches" may acknowledge together that they belong to those areas of our total life where the Gospel is hardly known. The need is for Church in world.

This task of world evangelism is not imposed, but is the response of man to a new confrontation with Christ on the Cross. The heart of the Father is broken for man, society, for culture and structure, sick and gone astray.

This Gospel needs proclamation to Americans by methods not conventional. A glimpse into the future suggests an even heightened need, for the advent of serious economic relapse (by 1950) will find this sick nation even less willing to bear world responsibility, even more confirmed in secular modes of thought, including highest ideal-

ism and lowest sin, both within the framework of this world.

Conventional methods of proclamation, as outlined above in Ch. III, pp. 12-14 may be "curt, clear, complete," but for *this* sick world it is all mystical and unintelligible to the religiously illiterate. The task of evangelism is to *communicate* with this world, offering the Gospel in forms neither unintelligible nor historically impossible. (Ch. II, p. 17) What, then, are the "unconventional methods?"

Let the diagnosis sink in. Stay with it long enough to make it clear that life is enslaved to powers which lead to destruction. Be relentless, accurate, and let no one say that the evil day is postponed because more Ford cars made more hot-dog stands. Learn from the man on the spot. Keep "in conversation with life" that the world's sickness may ever be re-interpreted in new dimensions.

Attack on all fronts, using every opportunity where "life can be caught," such as before marriage, before a service of baptism, before uniting with the Church.

Preach sermons which set real conflicts in the dimensions of Christianity. Drive out "demons" such as the doctrine of progress, "with or without Christian whiskers," and replace the demon with the presence of God in the present situation (existential theology). Every present situation is an *encounter* yielding meaning.¹ Avoid the trap of preaching to the secularist in his own language by creating a symbolic language with the meaning chiefly in Biblical terms.

Ground the Gospel beyond the changes and chances of life and so gain poise and strategy for action. Living close to operations of history gives one a frantic sense of crisis in each moment. The perspective of the Gospel gives poise and a freedom of action which in the crisis may turn the course of history.

Evangelism first confronts secularism, and results appear quickly. There is no mass evangelism now in middle and upper classes; crowds indicate only fellowship, and sermons exhibit only caricatures of evangelism. But in groups you speak, and listen, and have a chance to be rigorously honest. There may

1. "I love you." (situation) "I want you to marry me." (eschatology) "We were meant for each other." (creation)

be no communication for a long time, but in such a group (the Church) you have the locus of the fellowship in which one can know redemption, where no conflict is catastrophic.

This two-fold word, at once "simple," and "intellectual," had wide response on the deep level of renewed personal commitment to the primary task of the ministry. Members of groups expressed this rededication to each other, so far had the meeting between persons progressed. One can detect two notes of confession: there were those who had stressed so much the witness to the simple Gospel that they had neglected the durational experience necessary to reach more "intellectual" persons; others had been so taken up with meeting an "enlightened" world on its own ground that they had lost touch with the simple truth that God loved the world and sent His Son.

By this time, others in the groups had become persons, and not merely "points of view." All stood together in a new humility before the mystery of the Gospel which the most illiterate may grasp, be he Indian or Chinese or American, and yet which can sustain the most profound subtleties of expression for the most sophisticated. This total Gospel demands, indeed, the total program of the Church and the total dedication of the minister for its proclamation. Even then its grandeur and its simplicity surpass our programs and our witness.

Here in the groups one finds the heart of the conference. The experience in the groups provides the motivating memory each delegate has of Oxford 1947. In the "meetings" the "new" idea came clear, an insight shared but unappropriated, becoming the memorable treasure of all. "Where did you get this idea that 'they all may be one'?" asks a friend in 1957. "Ten years ago I attended the North American Interseminary Conference at Oxford, Ohio. The thing I remember most is that we met in small groups. In those groups we *were* one. That is how I know we can be one. That is why I work that we all may be one."

In meeting we discover the growing edge of God's continuing creation. All real life is meeting.

THE STRATEGY OF PENETRATION

OXFORD 1947 outlined a well-balanced strategy of penetration, in which the minister appeared as an important key. When it came to penetrating the disorder of world politics with God's design it was *The Churches* and World Order, but for the rest the strategy focused on *The Minister* and—Political and Economic Justice, Secular Culture, Racism, the Unity of the Church. This strategy aimed to meet the needs of the time as revealed in the "Interseminary Series" and in the addresses of diagnosis.

Alongside of this, to afford opportunity for what might appear, twenty-two interest groups functioned for four ninety-minute sessions. An analysis of delegates' choice of interest shows a significant variance from the balanced strategy offered by the Conference. The bearers of the "medicine" gathered round certain manifestations of sickness and neglected some others entirely. The ministers of tomorrow as represented at Oxford crowded around certain cracks in the secular front and passed by other possible points of penetration.

A selected group of sixty met to consider the future of the Interseminary Movement. The wide general interest in this found ample reflection in individual response and commitment on the questionnaire, and in the Town Meeting where action took place assuring the immediate future.¹ The Interseminary Movement will afford one strategy of penetration.

As for the others, seven of the twenty-one groups quickly crowded the limitation of thirty members, shunting many delegates into a second- or third-choice interest. These seven increased as the conference progressed, at the expense of others which dwindled or closed up altogether.

Making no allowances for the pulling power of individual leaders, Oxford 1947 showed ministers of tomorrow clustering around three strategies as offering the best hope of bringing the Gospel to a sick world: *The Discipline of Personal Prayer*;

1. See Appendix V, pp. 73-4.

Counseling; The Church and Politics. Two others were not far behind: Personal Evangelism and Foreign Missions. The leader of the latter comments that "the group grew from 22 to more than fifty. . . . They evidently were folks who had been looking forward to having a chance to clear up various puzzling problems. . . . Discussion was brisk at the final session. Members of the foreign student panel present failed to agree on future policies in foreign missions."

The interest shown in *The Discipline of Personal Prayer* suggests that the subject should have had platform presentation, and, more significantly, that the ministers of tomorrow are aware of a need for deepening their roots, roots which have lacked depth precisely because the sickness of the world has infected the very schools which train ministers. A high proportion of this group were women. The terrifying dimensions of the world's disorder may have made this personal discipline gain in attractiveness. ("At least this is something I can do.") Spontaneous comment early in the week had echoes in written comment of appreciation later. "The group on prayer was the most valuable thing for me." Sixteen half-hours were spent by the leader in personal interviews pointing to a future conference need for more groups and a division of leadership.

"The group on *Counseling* was larger than I anticipated in view of the richness of other offerings." Group decision in a choice offered by the leader provides a further clue to interest in this "strategy" for bringing the Gospel into contact with real life. In preference to an exploration of the relationship between counseling, psychology, etc., on the one hand to theology and the fundamental theme of the conference on the other, the vote was overwhelming to deal with approaches to and methods of counseling. "To say that the group was alert would be an understatement . . . though it was plain that very few of them had ever 'got down to cases' before." For this group, man's disorder must be dealt with on a one by one basis. The group on *Personal Evangelism* tempered this somewhat when it urged that individuals be reached chiefly by means of meetings in small groups.

In contrast to this individualistic interest, the group on the

Church and Politics explored the limitations and opportunities and responsibilities of the Church as an instrument for the healing of political disorder. The group divided on the familiar European and American line of political activity as a sin or a responsibility, with the one side granting that some responsibility might be allowed and the other accepting some restraints. The group came closest to agreement on the race question in opposition to *involuntary* segregation. "Here was a 'middle axiom' which could be shared with the secular idealists." Attendance declined until the last day, and "there was not the kind of growth that might be expected in other groups."

Groups with membership of between ten and thirty exhibited genuine and serious interest without the significant "urgency" of the five mentioned. *Church and Education* stood high in interest, but *Church Unity* as an idea led the rest. This points up the few who chose to explore the strategy of unity in local parishes, city or rural, or in terms of necessary organization. "Most of them are bored by organizations and have no idea how indispensable they are to the carrying on of the world-wide work of the churches." The lack of interest in such a subject as *National Missions* derives likely from the obscure phrasing of the title and overlapping with other groups.

In contrast to the delegates' pre-conference awareness of man's disorder as reflected in their choice of interest groups, the strategy of penetration offered by the conference program maintained close contact with the conference diagnosis. The addresses aimed to touch specifically those areas exposed in Chapter II as deviating furthest from God's design. In sequence the addresses dealt with the strategy of the Christian regarding World Order, Political and Economic Justice, Secular Culture in both its urban and rural aspects, Racism, and Church Unity.

The Church provides the most effective method of penetrating the world of nations with the testimony of the Gospel calling for brotherhood, justice and peace. While ministers must be informed and interested, it is the churches which must testify, unitedly, addressing the world of nations with the Word of God to effect

O. Frederick
Nolde

improvement of conditions. The United Nations provides a clearing house for human rights, opening the way both for individual response to the Word as well as national response.

The strategy calls for a continuing testimony relevant to the problems of the day, reformulating timeless fundamental principles, relating these principles to current questions, making blueprints to *aid* governments. This cannot be labeled the "social" Gospel; this is to take seriously the imperative of the *total* Gospel. To communicate this message there must be recognized organizations, such as the Permanent Commission on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. But this strategy is effective only if undergirded at the local level with alert and informed Christians. "If you want something to live, make it local," even if that something is as vast as the Word of God addressed to the world of nations.

In any local community the minister finds himself in a state of tension. On the one hand looms the world's need and on the other stands the lethargy of the group. His people want their own position blessed, yet he must be both prophet and priest, he must "afflict the comfortable" as well as "comfort the afflicted." While this is true regarding questions of world order, this tension becomes acute in the realm of political and economic justice.

Any effective strategy rests upon the minister having "earned the right to lead the people in social ways." Keeping the Gospel interest clearly paramount, he must establish a basic community and postpone (perhaps indefinitely) alienation. He must keep close to his ruling body and have their complete confidence. At all costs he must avoid a martyr's complex, feeling that "criticism proves he is doing the Lord's work." He must ride no single aspect of his ministry, but touch all sides of life. Singling out no special individuals, he must always "speak the truth in love."

Upon this foundation a minister may proceed to educate his people in the realm of political and economic justice, beginning by informing himself. Here it will be necessary to use not only the usual sources of information in the secular daily press

and weekly news magazines, but also sources which present a contrasting viewpoint such as *The Nation* or *The New Republic*. In addition sources avowedly Christian are indispensable, especially those, like *Information Service* of the Federal Council, which are designed to offer factual information, as well as those like the *Christian Century*, which are largely interpretative. Beyond this he must learn on the spot by visiting areas of tension. Visits to the council of social agencies and to labor unions will mean more than golf or luncheon clubs. The results of this learning provide, with the Word of God, the *content* for preaching, the *interest* of a church night program, the *basis of operation* for a social action committee. It is the laymen who must *act like Christians* in particular situations. They need depth and perspective not provided by the mere opinions of the minister, but by his sharing with them out of true knowledge and faith. Along with this a minister needs to cooperate with the activities of his state Council of Churches which may "coach" and support him in some tension situations.

In addition to a strategy involving book knowledge and familiarity in the field, the minister needs special skill in handling controversies. But neither this much-needed intellectual or social competence will avail unless the minister believes that "the economic order is the subject of redemption, that righteousness can be established in the economic sphere." Beneath all his descriptive knowledge of economic realities, he needs *normative* knowledge which sets every local situation in its eternal perspective, making possible the expression of "middle axioms" on which the whole community may work for economic justice. But "middle axioms" which pay more attention to what the "public will take" than to the Gospel come under suspicion as escapism.

"In our approach to the secular culture, it is relationships that are important, not resolutions or institutions." Of course the persons who make up a church have a secular taint, but they are "called to be saints," and the minister deals with them at the point where secular life hits them. The minister deals with the community at the point

where his congregation impinges on the community. In these relationships God works, not through magic, but through men.

The present situation calls on a church for means, methods, techniques. A church is not a club, but an expendable unit in an army of Christ. Being a community with a past and a becoming, it may give up what it has been (St. Martin's in the Fields, London, became a religious monument on Trafalgar Square) believing in what it may become. When this reformation takes place in a church it spills over into community Christian service. The Church is not a shrine but a medium for effective Christian living. To the defeatist wail of "it won't work" it opposes faith and expectancy.

"Mingle. Enter into relationships. As you learn to listen you will find opportunity to speak. Declare the Gospel and others will join with you."

Fifteen years of experience trying to bring the will of God to bear upon the total life of a rural community—individual citizens, families, social and economic structure—
Eugene Smathers provide further insights as to the strategy of penetration open to a minister in relation to the all-pervasive secular culture. Realizing that "man cannot be man alone," that "love can be realized only in community," the purpose of this strategy is simply evangelism in its fullest sense. The purpose is the building of community, but purpose is not the same as method.

Method begins with worship, the core of Christian community. "Detached worship," rural or urban, helps secularism. Worship must celebrate, consecrate, illumine the daily round of soil, family, community. The minister's strategy continues with fellowship in the development of which rural life offers some advantages. This fellowship offers security for the lonely and provides a matrix for Christian development and a witness of the power of the Gospel.

From this base the member of the fellowship can move out to discipleship in the midst of various secular activities, activities which need evaluation as "allies" or "alternatives." This infiltration looks toward the redemption of rural organizations. The member of the fellowship may further be led to see that

land, nature, life and man are bound together; that soil, society, and souls are saved together; that there is such a thing as "sin against the soil," and that scientific soil culture is the law of God, the "how" but not the "why."

This strategy calls upon the minister and the fellowship to be the "agency of integration," rather than one more divisive, secular, competing denominational group. The Church is identified with the total Christian movement, and the community seen as a whole becomes a microcosm of the world community.

To see a community as a whole requires that the minister know the local structure in the midst of large trends, know problems and resources, agencies and organizations, local leaders and local history, methods and men. He may then act as mediator in the local manifestation of the larger struggle (e.g., agriculture vs. labor), and work through education to declare a Christian philosophy of rural life emphasizing the "sacredness" of every vocation and the primacy of the values of the family over the values of the factory. At this point the strategy of penetration emerges crystal clear: undergird the family; recover it as a "center of religious instruction and religious ceremony."

Where racism cries for "penetration," the strategy must rest on sound Christian doctrine and thorough knowledge of the facts of science on race and the facts of the actual situation in the churches.

Baez

Camargo

The Federal Council summarizes Christian doctrine at this point reminding us that the human race is one; that all men have a common origin, a common creator, a common redeemer. Apparent differences are "callings" from God for service, not the ground of a hierarchy of groups.

Science underlines this Christian doctrine despite confusion in details. Boaz concludes that there are two races: Negroid and Mongolian, leaving the Europeans to take their choice. Culture is not a function of race, is not biologically transmitted. Race supremacy is incidental, not natural; a social myth and not a biological fact. Nevertheless, "race is man's most dangerous myth."

For racism is a world force, larger than Nazism, with points

of tension on every continent. Racism is involved in the general rise of independence movements. It emerges in many disguises, a thousand petty superstitions. Take a look at even University application forms. Listen when someone says, "Blood will tell." Protestantism has flourished in a "zone of consent" to racism leading to a high correlation between the two.

Strategy does not fail in either doctrine or knowledge. Strategy fails at the point of courage to act on the basis of doctrine and knowledge. A minister must act where he is, in a present situation, making of his group a pattern of the new society. Every missionary enterprise is a laboratory experiment. A man needs the wisdom of a sage, the courage and determination of a hero.

Exactly what should a minister do? A minister should respond as a Christian individual in concrete situations, avoiding hypocrisy, undergirding effectiveness by being sure of himself. He may help himself by making real, warm, personal friends; protesting discrimination in signs, transportation, lodgings; remembering that silence here is consent, is un-Christian.

Charles
Jones

Having worked on himself, he may begin work on his church, realizing that trouble is inevitable. A well-rounded program will help. "Don't ride the 'race' horse." He must understand the people as he hopes they will understand him, leading them through the process he has been through in the faith that a "meeting" will change their lives. Not lectures, sermons, special discussions and observances, but actual experiences provide the strategy of penetration.

In everything, the minister must be honest. "Much strategy is simply dishonesty." A minister must love *his* people as much as he loves the oppressed ones. He can love people into changed attitudes better than he can bludgeon them. Above all he must have confidence in the power of God's spirit to change his people.

In the last analysis it is God who penetrates, and not our strategy.

The job of bringing about unity among the churches calls for its own strategy. The job is made difficult as most of the vital activity in the churches today, despite lip service to the world Church, encourages denominationalism.

Gordon
Sisco

Strategy begins with a clear doctrine of the Church. In opposition to the historically false, traditional Protestant emphasis on the Church as gathered one by one, must be set the fact that "the Church was before us, met us, nurtured us, taught us," and will be here after us. "The Church is here by the grace of God as the sequence of the life of Christ that men may be redeemed into a community of love." "There is no Christianity without community." Without the Church, the Gospel is lost to a vague idealism in which there is no recovery of Christ. All we know is mediated through the Church. This doctrine saves a church membership from localism.

An effective strategy then calls for worship in which people may *respond* to the total Gospel. This worship must embrace all classes in a complete cultural pluralism. Unity is furthered by visitation evangelism on an inter-church, community basis, and parish centers operated collectively. A ministerial union to be vital may not comprise too wide an area. The key in all this is "likemindedness" not "kindred" (separate) minds.

It is a tragedy that the only church expression is through a multitude of churches. In opposition to secularism there is no future for an atomistic Protestantism.

Every parish needs to be an ecumenical, world parish, with the economic resources of the parish helping all, and the cultural services available to all. Among the churches, unity may be underlined by a United Church Canvass preceded by common publicity, using a common liturgy, common hymns, common sermon.

John
De Forest
Pettus

Lapel labels, auto stickers, continuous advertising on a mental level, hymn festivals and a dozen other devices all work in some places at the right time. The strategy must fit itself to particular problems and conditions.

The mental climate in most communities is deaf to the Gos-

pel. Basic assumptions of the community are either non-Christian or un-Christian, but the public mind is public, and the minister is free to plant other assumptions. This strategy must recognize *parochialism* as group selfishness in its most virulent form. No parish is a private preserve with "no trespassing" signs about. The strategy must face up to the fact that "current standards of giving are blasphemous." The ecumenical Church is not a cheap Church. Looking at the world *as it is*, this strategy *claims* material things for God, "makes its budget on the basis of God who gave all."

None of this comes easy. These new relationships need building from the ground up by *conversions*. Most people who share this secular mental climate are not *nice* people, but are souls split wide open which "only the daily gift of God's power can heal."

The Interseminary Movement includes itself among the "strategies of penetration." The stirrings of students in seminaries as they have responded to the impact of our culture bring themselves to a focus in this conference. This week together constitutes the third stage of a process.

But the "stirrings" that come here are not to plan the future of an organization, but to implement a decision which has grown up among the seminary students of North America. The total experience has confronted us with Doom, Christ, the Church. We have come to see that we must reform the Church in order to reform the world.

Three presuppositions underlie "the implementation of this reformation." *First*, the reformation is not possible without spiritual power and intellectual clarity. How may this power flow through us to the world? How may we speak with authority? *Second*, no reformation is possible without far greater leadership than is at present available. We are poor weak instruments in His hands. *Third*, no reformation is possible without far more adequate training than students are now receiving.

This strategy has as its goal the "reformation of the Church" and it has as its instrument "a fellowship of those of similar calling in the seminaries."

Despite widespread determination to push the Interseminary Movement, and beyond individual determination to "go home and try" this or that strategy on a particular local problem, the delegates as a group registered their combined response to the conference quite differently. Only fifteen of the entire conference indicated that "suggested techniques" had been for them the most revealing or inspiring item in the total conference experience. This should not be taken to indicate any flagging of attention at this point in the conference. If anything, the attention to detail seemed keener, the applause seemed more sustained, amounting in one instance almost to an ovation.

Two observations may help account for the delegates' higher appraisal of other parts of the total experience. In the first place, a remark dropped in the midst of one of the addresses struck home: "Much strategy is dishonesty." Who knows how many delegates remembered schemes to "get around" some difficult person in order to "put something over" for Christ? But deeper was the realization that every strategy is but the response of a particular individual at a certain time under a special set of circumstances. In a word, the crux of all strategy is not the verb "to do" but the verb "to be." What each of the speakers "did" in his situation was but his response because of what he "was." No amount of *doing* could cover a defect of *being*. The interest and the applause were really for the latter rather than the former as each of the nine speakers bore witness to one element of what the planning committee conceived to be a balanced strategy which the minister might use to penetrate the disorder of the world with the Gospel of Christ.

It is to the implications of this deeper insight that we turn in the next chapter.

"REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH"

BEHIND THIS RESPONSE of the delegates which rated analysis above strategy, and appreciation and understanding of fellow Christians above analysis, can we not discern the channels of God's design? When seminarians say, "I am humbled but sincerely more dedicated," and "I have crystalized the direction of my future ministry," may we not take hope for the future? When others add that "the conference bears witness to the fact that there is only one Gospel," and "I feel I can serve this generation better because of the ecumenical movement," may we not say with some confidence that "redemption draweth nigh"?

What are the main channels of God's design as they have existed from eternity and as they found their formulation anew in the total experience of Oxford 1947? Student response, pre-conference planning, and the main emphases as they emerged during the week together all flow into two primary channels: the vocation of the minister and the unity of the Church. Compared to these, all strategies are rivulets. The one gathers the power of all strategies having to do with depth and upreach. (The delegates registered their choice of interest group in this area.) The other brings together the drive of all strategies which stress outreach and oneness. Together these two channels of design point to the superficiality of every particular method of "getting the Gospel across" and to the fundamental character of the reality to which response is made in some detailed way that changes with time and place. The seed in the soil responds to sun and rain and its own inner life, but no two plants are identical.

The emergence of these channels, and the force with which they gripped the conference, is due not only to the speeches and the discussions we have been dealing with, but also—uniquely—to the daily worship services. It had been the hope of the planning committee that worship would form the very basis of all that transpired at the conference; that having begun each day in a common service of worship, the delegates

would be lifted in their thinking and their spirit into the highest levels; that here would be a confrontation with each other in worship and supremely with God. To achieve the end, it was planned that the services would not refer directly to any single theme of the conference, nor to the daily subjects as they came up for consideration, but that they rather should cut across all of the deliberations. Moreover, it was planned that the services should not adhere strictly to any of the historical liturgical practices, although their general form would need to conform to one broad tradition.

The services, which were planned and led by Alexander C. Zabriskie, fully met these qualifications and hopes. Broadly in a liturgical as distinguished from a free tradition, their unifying theme was the Lord's Prayer.¹ In the responsive reading of the psalms, the use of the great prayers and timeless hymns of the Church, and in the profoundly moving interpretations offered by Dr. Zabriskie, there arose among the delegates the spiritual community which was at once the motive and the fulfillment of the unity of mind and spirit so marked throughout the conference. This was symbolized, and also furthered, by the remarkable singing of hymns. Led by James R. Sydnor, the delegates sang with a spontaneity and feeling and volume surprising to the most hardened conference goers. No such music could have been produced without a great underlying conviction and experience. Here was the reality of Christ's Body, into which all had entered; here also was the force of Christ's call to each made clear: "Thy will be done."

After wide consultation, it had been previously decided that there should be no service of Holy Communion at the conference, on the grounds that since not all present could participate, it would be best not to have a service to which all could not come. It is worthy of note that the sense of unity and community grew so strong as to occasion considerable resistance at the conference to this decision. It was therefore determined to hold, not a service of Communion, but rather a service of

1. The booklets containing the successive worship services, entitled "Thy Kingdom. Come," are available from the Interseminary Movement, 347 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y., for \$.25.

repentance for the sin of division, and of dedication to the furtherance of unity. Here again came forth the notes of unity and of calling: for there was probably no deeper sense of unity, nor more forceful calling to the goal of further unity than that which moved through repentant hearts on this occasion.

Thus comes one delegate's evaluation of the "most notable achievement" of the conference as a whole, in words which carry overtones of the responses of many others: "It confronted us with the desparate world situation, man's limitations and the dynamic of the Gospel, thus constructing a framework into which the thinking of six hundred seminarians will tend to fit for years to come. It also has provided an interdenominational fellowship and understanding which will bear fruit in ecumenical terms for years ahead." This "framework" obviously is bounded by the two channels of God's design—the vocation of the minister and the unity of the Church. A rehearing of the addresses which relate the minister and the Church to specific situations reveals the basic awareness of these channels which provided the presupposition of each address. Behind the interesting specific details and techniques, the delegates heard—and responded to—these two major notes.

The Christian testimony is not based on the prospect of success. "When the odds are toughest, strength is greatest."

O. Frederick Nolde The churches have a responsibility which they have already undertaken to assume by addressing the United Nations in its functions which lie beyond those of a mere security league. By a consolidation of forces, the churches may demonstrate the community which the world of nations seeks to realize.

This united testimony is nothing less than the voice of an undivided "fellowship of the unashamed," a fellowship of those who declare the Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. This testimony, of course, is not to be made in general, but somewhere. The world Christian community is made up of local communities becoming Christian. Any idea that the Christian aspect of this local community constitutes a separated community, and

Eugene Smathers any notion that only certain callings are sacred callings, simply helps secularism to triumph. The ecumenical reformation pointing up Christian unity begins right where you live; otherwise all hopes and aspirations are in vain.

Ultimate success therefore depends upon making Christianity local. In fact, Christianity equals community-issuing-in-Church.

Gordon Sisco Locally this may mean a vital ministerial union where the members strengthen each other with regard to the world concerns of the whole Church. This does not mean there will be organic union by tomorrow; there are plenty who will put on the brakes. (Applause) But it does raise the question as to whether God will wait for the Spirit to transform the churches and unite them into a new organism, or whether the churches will be left by the wayside while the Spirit finds habitation in some new body which really qualifies as the Body of Christ.

This conference gives us hope that the churches may yield to the transforming power of the Spirit. For this conference

John De Forest Pettus represents no denominational union achieved by the manipulation of techniques. The conference shows forth the presence of a living spirit, gathering us here *together* "not because we are good, but because we are redeemed; not because we are wise, but because we are Christ's fools; not because we are rich, but because we are stewards of the infinite riches of God."

This movement which makes Christians gravitate toward each other is old in impulse but new in fulfilment. The ecumenicity of our time is something utterly new, a

H. P. Van Dusen and Student Panel reversal of the schismatic trend of eighteen centuries of accelerated division, a division which never ceased to contradict Christian profession. We are the witnesses of equally profound, coercive tides toward unity.

In the last 150 years Christian practice has not contradicted Christian profession: no major schism has appeared. In 1795 not one interdenominational grouping existed anywhere in the

world. At the present moment the many different types of groupings defy comprehension but add up to hope. We may discern some broad patterns. As for *organic union*, one hundred major unions have taken place in the last 100 years. *Federation* exists in every nation, for common action. The *World Council* includes 122 major communions. Specific *projects*, like frankly interdenominational theological seminaries, operate in the lands of the younger churches. *Christian youth* tend to ignore denominational boundaries. Among the *leadership* of non-Roman Christendom there exists nearly complete mutual trust, understanding, fellowship. "They plan and think alike on the strategy of the churches in Christendom."

The World Council has been called "the most significant event of the 20th century." Here indeed is the "ecumenical reformation." And there is no doubt whatever that the Council is one of the most important events in Christian history.

Any canvass of personal experience leading up to "conversion" to—or even interest in—the ecumenical reformation brings out as many paths as there are persons, from the Chinese rebuke of our Christian divisions, to having parents of different denominations, to the insight that "God is too big for any one denomination." Among the delegates it was revealed that a large majority had come from such "mixed" marriages. Among the delegates it was further revealed that Christian unity had no precise meaning, but was a vague word to which each responded in his own way. Out of the responses certain agreement could be discerned: there exists a difference between division and *alienation* over division. "Division which is divisive is a sin." But "division which is diversity in love is no sin." While there is much room for organizational unity, it is to be remembered that "every organization subtends something greater than itself." Further, it must be pointed out that the ideal is an obligation laid on and not an expedient.

Giving a glance at the Roman Church the question may be asked whether it is Christ's will that there be one single, organic Church. Over this question there exists a wide diversity of opinion, but to acknowledge this does not prevent us from lifting up certain minimum conditions for Christian unity.

These minimum conditions might include as a proximate goal: (1) complete interchange of ministry and intercommunion; (2) consciousness by the individual of his membership in the universal Church; (3) inter-sharing in the administration of the Lord's Supper; (4) "extension of the function of ministries" by a service of re-ordination of others; (5) undergirding with a common message and a united witness. Yet however these conditions may be stated, they must be grounded upon the reality of a common message.

The imperatives to Christian unity thus reveal themselves. The first is *expediency*. Not one of the most pressing problems of our world, in the mission field, or in our secular life, can be met without unity. "Town and nation will not listen to a divided voice." The unreached of the world may be reached only by a pooling of resources. We may run the machinery of a divided church but we can never do the job. The second is the *will of Christ*, revealed in his prayer "that they all may be one." Churches cannot really be Christian in disunity; but in unity all worship is richer, every ministry is enlarged, increased. Who wants to keep on saying: "I am only a part minister, a minister of part of the Church of Christ."

A next step may be suggested: Confederation. We have achieved consultation and co-operation. Now we must move on to a wholehearted pooling of resources, both locally and nationally. We need a total strategy, both geographical and sociological. Our outreach must be in terms of this strategy. There must be conscription of the ablest leaders of all denominations for the service of the ecumenical Church. There must follow the loyal enlistment of *all* in our common tasks, without regard for personal sacrifice. All together shall proclaim a single evangel, spoken in unison, with different voices.

With many top denominational leaders in our country already committed to the ecumenical reformation, what is the meaning of these imperatives and these next steps for each of us? Each must become ecumenical right where he lives, "disseminating the holy contagion." Christian unity and the vocation of the minister are equally channels of God's design.

Here we see quite clearly, alongside the dominant note

stressing the intrinsic and emerging unity of the Church, the second equally important channel of the ecumenical reformation discerned by the conference; the vocation of the minister. We hear this note as clearly as the first, sounding throughout the addresses which bore witness to the relationships between the minister as the man of God and the world as the disorder of man.

Any dedicated minister finds himself in a state of tension. As representative of God's love and mercy he must act as priest to a people distraught by the world. As representative of God's judgment and righteousness he must be a prophet to a people whose actions make the world distraught.

In these relationships, the minister is the responsible leader of a church, with responsibility to God for society, beginning with his own economic life. The key to right relationships here roots in the minister's relation to the Kingdom. Always he must ask the question: what do these economic conditions do to persons and their motivations. The usual "social gospel" falls into the secular trap when it focuses attention on the conditions rather than the person in the midst of the conditions. The goal for the minister is the achievement of relations of justice and righteousness on whatever level the economic system can produce and support. In striving for the goal, he is the representative of both official Christianity—inevitably more conservative—and unofficial Christianity as well.

Personally, as private citizen and Christian, his vocation may lead him to support cell groups and encourage the "permanent" revolution. Always the dual role in which he acts must be kept in balance. Always he acts in the faith that a durational experience may bring about deeper levels of understanding.

It is the minister's high calling, and not any considerations of strategy, which makes it mandatory, in the area of racial tension or any other area, for the minister to have a clear knowledge of scientific facts as well as a firm grounding in Christian doctrine. It is the minister's high vocation rather than the prospect of any immediate ad-

vantage, which makes the minister act in any present situation, seeking to make of his group "a pattern of the new society."

Charles Jones It is the minister's vocation rather than any special technique, which calls upon him to love his people though he may differ with them radically. It is the vocation of the minister to have confidence in the power of God's spirit to change such people. It is the vocation of the minister which keeps him everlastingly at the job of chipping away at the parochialism of his congregation, pointing ever at the goal of making the ecumenical church local. It was the vocation of a number of ministers which caused them to bring about this "meeting" between persons and persons, between persons and man's disorder, between persons and God's design. It will be the vocation of many ministers to give local embodiment to this ecumenical Church, this "Church which has looked on God's face and had its lips touched with a burning coal, this Church sent of God to redeem creation, an expendable instrument, a divine organism."

Gordon Sisco

John DeForest Pettus

The questions put to each minister as he hears anew his high calling are simply these. Have you given yourself to God? Have you undergone the moral purging, the spiritual discipline? Will you go for Him, even into the world seen here in all its depth and darkness and disorder?

In spite of this high calling, our times make it easier to be a poor minister, and harder to be a good one, than ever before.

John Oliver Nelson There is a shortage of ministers. One veteran felt he must excuse himself for not following through on his plan to enter the ministry: "My business ain't as bad as I thought." Education is easy and cheap. One school preparing ministers offers a \$500 scholarship to *every* student. But the strongest reason of all is that most congregations do not want their ministers to do very much. All this makes it harder to be a good minister.

A good minister maintains a tension with society precisely because he is a minister. Always to his world he is guilty until he is proved innocent, he is out of step until it is apparent

that he is not. Some ministers seek escape from this intolerable tension by questionable means. With loud ties and off-color stories they try to elicit the comment: he is just like any one of us. The true resolution of this tension lies in the direction of making everyone aware of his Christian vocation, letting it be known that "God calls plumbers," that parsons have no monopoly on doing the will of God.

A good minister must make his own way intellectually, never resting entirely on some fixed doctrine. In the realm of social action, he is expected to take some stand. Of him, devotional life is required. "A congregation knows a spiritual phoney." His "rule" should be *anonymity* (let God get credit), *frugality* (no material goods or food beyond need), *dedication* (saying every morning: "O God, this day is Thine.")

The minister is called to be a walking revelation of God. It is his to pull aside the curtain that others may see the face of God. The *best* preaching is only the honest effort of fallen creatures to respond to God. The vocation of the minister is to "live out his life under the terrible and wonderful yoke laid on him by Christ."

"No community rises higher than its church. No church rises higher than its leadership. No leadership rises higher than that part of him which is hid with Christ in God."

Douglas Horton The minister is not only preacher and priest and prophet. Above all else, the minister is a *channel* for the life of Christ to reach into the life of the community.

Our world presents Christians strongly with the temptation to take the "balcony view of life, withdrawing, and simply observing the tragic but fascinating scene. But this is not the Christian way, for Christ was a participant *in history* to demonstrate God's concern for human life, to reveal God to people. No book can do what Christ did. The Man is more important than the Book.

In the life of a tribe, the high moment in the ritual is the sacrifice, revealing God at work. In the life of the human race, *the minister is the sacrifice*. The minister is the *victim* of reality. He is most obviously the victim when he is *unable* to preach, being overwhelmed with the reality of the living God.

It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of a *living* God. If only he were a dead God! Then we might be comfortable. But if we are comfortable, then we know that we are separated from Christ.

Here we come to the very heart of the matter: the minister's relation to Christ. This is summed up in John 15, and especially in verse sixteen: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

Charles Clayton Morrison The situation in which these words were spoken makes them especially significant. Physical separation was to take place, and soon. Should Jesus review his teaching, stressing certain points? No. Should he exhort his disciples to faithfulness? No. Should he remind them of their relationship to him? Yes.

The natural way for Jesus to remind them would have been to say: Remember your pledge. But such a reminder is dated, and at the last, recalls only a dimly remembered dream. Jesus' way of reminding them of their relationship was to say that the relationship was not of their making, but something which had "come upon" them, an experience with which they were confronted—with which they *are* confronted, eternally. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

In this we find a microcosm of Christianity. The initiative is God's. Man's response may be anything from rebellion to acceptance. In all the great concepts of Christianity—Revelation, Salvation, Atonement, Love, Prayer, Grace, Faith—God's act comes first.

The disciples had had the notion that they were honoring Christ by their success. But not in the Upper Room, nor with Peter after Pentacost. Then they knew what every minister comes to know: we are "clutched hold upon" rather than following a profession using talents. True freedom is to be a "slave of Christ." ("Make me a captive Lord, and then I shall be free.") Our lives are not our own, but are bought with a price. God has a design. Man discovers this design through the commitment of his will. Then he has God's mark on him. This mark gives man his dignity, his responsibility, his power.

Dignity is "laid on" a minister. Dignity is unattainable, but conferred. He called us "friends" so we may call Him friend. He lifts us out of despair, and frustration.

Responsibility is precisely what the two parts of the word mean: the ability to respond. This ability is conferred, "laid on." The seriousness of responsibility comes because man is under *obligation* being possessed by another.

Power is conferred. Nietzsche and humanism bade us to be rid of the superhuman, to stand on our own resources, to quit thinking of and depending on God. "Get to work," says humanism. Christianity on the contrary makes men weak, and then power is conferred, "laid on." The poor human instrument is *empowered*. God's design and purpose for us make us strong.

Every minister may well ask himself this question: Is my choice of vocation my choice? Or is my vocation my *response* to His choice of me?

Such a ministry reveals itself to be the channel by which the life of Christ reaches into the life of the world. With such a ministry we find the burning heart of Church in World.

APPENDIX I

Theological Schools Represented

American Baptist Theological Seminary, Nashville, Tennessee
Andover Newton Theological Seminary, Newton Centre, Massachusetts
Allen University School of Religion, Columbia, S.C.
Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin, Texas
Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky.
Augustana Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Ill.
Alfred University School of Theology, Alfred, N. Y.
Berkeley Baptist Divinity School, Berkeley, Calif.
Bethany Biblical Seminary, Chicago, Ill.
Brite College of the Bible, Fort Worth, Texas
Benedict College School of Religion, Columbia, S.C.
Bonebrake Divinity School, Dayton, Ohio
Bexley Hall, Gambier, Ohio
Berkeley Divinity School, New Haven, Conn.
Baptist Missionary Training School, Chicago, Ill.
Biblical Seminary in New York, New York, N. Y.
Bangor Theological Seminary, Bangor, Maine
Butler University, Indianapolis, Ind.
Bishop's University, Lennoxville, Quebec
Boston University School of Theology, Boston, Mass.
Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia
College of the Bible, Lexington, Ky.
Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, Calif.
Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary, Maywood, Ill.
Colgate Rochester Divinity School, Rochester, N. Y.
Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, Pa.
Chicago Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill.
Capital University Seminary, Columbus, Ohio
Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.
Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa
Disciples Divinity House, University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.
Duke Divinity School, Durham, N.C.
Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey
Eastern Baptist Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa.
Emmanuel Theological College, Toronto, Ontario
Eden Theological Seminary, Webster Groves, Mo.
Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, P.R.
Evangelical Theological Seminary, Naperville, Ill.
Episcopal Theological Seminary, Cambridge, Mass.
General Assembly's Training School, Richmond, Va.
Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Ill.
General Theological Seminary, New York, N. Y.

Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.
 Hama Divinity School, Springfield, Ohio
 Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, Conn.
 Hood Theological Seminary, Salisbury, N.C.
 Huron Theological School, London, Ontario
 Howard University School of Religion, Washington, D.C.
 Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Colo.
 Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.
 Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary, Columbia, S.C.
 Lutheran Seminary, Waterloo, Ontario
 Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa.
 Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mt. Airy, Philadelphia, Pa.
 Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Chicago, Illinois
 McMaster Divinity School, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
 McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Ill.
 Montreal Diocesan College, Montreal, Canada
 Moravian Theological Seminary, Bethlehem, Pa.
 Meadville Theological School, Chicago, Ill.
 Nashota House, Nashota, Wis.
 New Brunswick Theological School, New Brunswick, N. J.
 North Park Seminary, Chicago, Ill.
 Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary, Minneapolis, Minn.
 Oberlin Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin, Ohio
 Phillips University, College of the Bible, Enid, Okla.
 Presbyterian College of Christian Education, Chicago, Ill.
 Presbyterian College, Montreal, Canada
 Philadelphia Divinity School, Philadelphia, Pa.
 Pine Hill, Halifax, Nova Scotia
 Payne Seminary, Wilberforce, Ohio
 Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, Calif.
 Presbyterian Theological College, Montreal, Canada
 Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.
 Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pa.
 Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas,
 Texas
 Queens Theological College, Kingston, Ontario
 Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.
 Scarritt College for Christian Workers, Nashville, Tennessee
 Schauffler College, Cleveland, Ohio
 San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, Calif.
 Starr King Seminary, Berkeley, Calif.
 School of Religion, Bishop College, Marshall, Texas
 St. John's Anglican College, Winnipeg, Canada
 St. Margaret's House, Berkeley, Calif.
 Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill.
 Trinity College, Toronto, Ontario

Theological Seminary of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Lancaster, Pa.
 Temple School of Theology, Philadelphia, Pa.
 Union College of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia
 University of Chicago Divinity School, Chicago, Ill.
 United Church Training School, Toronto, Canada
 United College, Winnipeg, Canada
 University of the South, School of Theology, Sewanee, Tennessee
 University of Southern California, School of Religion, Los Angeles, Calif.
 Union Theological College
 United Theological College, Montreal, Canada
 Union Theological Seminary, New York, N. Y.
 Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va.
 Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Va.
 Vanderbilt University School of Religion, Nashville, Tenn.
 Virginia Union University, School of Religion, Richmond, Va.
 Wiley University, School of Religion, Marshall, Texas
 Wycliffe College, Toronto, Ontario
 Windham House, New York, N. Y.
 Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Mich.
 Westminster Theological Seminary, Rendallstown, Md.
 Western Theological Seminary of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa.
 Western University, Montreal, Canada
 Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn.

APPENDIX II

Churches Represented

African Methodist Episcopal Church
 African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
 American Lutheran Church
 Church of the Brethren
 Church of England
 Church of God
 Church of the Nazarene
 Church of the United Brethren in Christ
 Churches of Christ
 Congregational-Christian Churches
 Cumberland Presbyterian Church
 Disciples of Christ
 English Reformed Church of France
 Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod of North America

Evangelical Mission Covenant Church of America
 Evangelical and Reformed Church
 Evangelical United Brethren
 Fire Baptized Holiness Church
 Greek Orthodox Church
 Holy Catholic Church of China
 Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, Missouri Synod
 Mar Thoma Syrian Christian Church of South India
 Methodist Church
 Mennonite Church
 Moravian Church
 National Baptist Convention
 Northern Baptist Convention
 Philippine Independent Church
 Presbyterian Church in the U.S.
 Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
 Presbyterian Church of Canada
 Protestant Church of Switzerland
 Protestant Episcopal Church
 Reformed Church in America
 Reformed Church of Holland
 Remonstrant Church of Holland
 Seventh Day Baptists
 Society of Friends
 Southern Baptist Convention
 Unitarian Churches
 United Church of Canada
 Unitarian Churches of Czechoslovakia
 United Lutheran Church in America
 United Presbyterian Church of North America

APPENDIX III

Leaders Present

Raymond Albright	John Deschner
Roswell P. Barnes	R. H. Edwin Espy
Eugene Barth	W. O. Fennell
Waldo Beach	Buell G. Gallagher
John C. Bennett	H. C. Goerner
Robert S. Bilheimer	Harry Goodykoontz
Charles H. Brown	Theodore M. Greene
Baez Camargo	Cameron P. Hall
E. Fay Campbell	Marvin Halverson
Samuel McC. Cavert	Georgia Harkness
T. C. Chao	Paul S. Heath
Clarence T. Craig	Seward Hiltner
H. L. Creager	W. Richey Hogg
John M. Currie	Douglas Horton

Ralph Hyslop
Mordecai W. Johnson
Harold Ingalls
Charles M. Jones
E. Felix Kloman
Kenneth S. Latourette
Henry S. Leiper
Robert Lennox
John A. Mackay
James I. McCord
Roy McCorkle
Jesse J. McNeill
Charles C. Morrison
A. T. Mollegen
Walter G. Muelder
John O. Nelson
James H. Nichols
O. Frederick Nolde
Victor Obenhaus
Edward F. Ouellette
Hoyt Palmer

John DeForest Pettus
Liston Pope
Eliot Porter
A. L. Roberts
J. Coert Rylaarsdam
Lynn Rohrbough
Gordon Sisco
Eugene Smathers
Wilbert Smith
Douglas Steere
John Subhan
James Sydnor
Charles P. Taft
Charles L. Taylor
Elton Trueblood
Henry P. Van Dusen
Frederick West
Daniel D. Williams
Herrick B. Young
Alexander C. Zabriskie

APPENDIX IV

"THE INTERSEMINARY SERIES"

(New York: Harper and Brothers, 1946)

- Volume I *The Challenge of our Culture*, Clarence T. Craig, Editor.
Volume II *The Church and Organized Movements*, Randolph C. Miller, Editor.
Volume III *The Gospel, The Church and The World*, Kenneth S. Latourette, Editor.
Volume IV *Toward World-Wide Christianity*, O. Frederick Nolde, Editor.
Volume V *What Must The Church Do?* Robert S. Bilheimer.

* * *

Church In America, Edward F. Ouellete. Study outline for "The Interseminary Series." (New York: The Interseminary Movement, 1947.)

APPENDIX V

The following was thoroughly discussed by the "Interest Group" on the Interseminary Movement, presented to the conference as a whole and adopted.

I. Purpose

The Interseminary Movement is a movement of students and faculty who believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, who are in institutions in the United States training for various aspects of the ministry,

and who are dedicated to the ecumenical reformation, namely the fundamental reawakening among individuals, congregations and confessions which leads to the pursuit of the full mission of the Church of Jesus Christ in the entire world and which seeks greater unity among Christians and churches in this world mission.

II. Program

It is proposed that there be four basic elements in the program of the Interseminary Movement:

1) An intensive program of study-discussion-prayer. No single term conveys what is here proposed. The substance of the matter is that the Movement should stimulate the formation of groups to meet for the purpose of a fundamental wrestling, intellectually and spiritually, with basic questions relating to the ecumenical reformation.

2) A program of witness concerning the ministry as a vocation, the distinctive character of which will be the testimony of seminary students to their younger contemporaries in colleges and high schools concerning the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ. Three fundamental principles will control the program:

- a) an initial period of careful experimentation consisting of a few well planned projects to determine the best methods for the future
 - b) careful clearance with the different denominational and inter-denominational programs of enlistment
 - c) the ministry would in each case be presented in ecumenical terms; that is, the call would be a call to the ministry of the Church of Christ, without reference to any particular branch of it, nor to any single aspect of this ministry, and such technical advice to students as the choice of seminary would be recognized as outside the province of this program.
- 3) A program to stimulate study of the general subject of theological education in the light of the ecumenical conception of the Church and its task. Careful correlation of this inquiry with any other comparable inquiries will be necessary. The effectiveness of this program will depend wholly upon the general thought which it arouses. The function thus of the Interseminary Movement will be to provide the framework in which discussion may take place, for such effect as it may have on the individuals who participate in it.
- 4) A triennial North American Interseminary Conference.

III. Organization

The following organization is proposed:

- 1) Local committees, appointed where desirable by the student body to initiate local program and to maintain regional and national relationships.
- 2) Regional Councils composed of one or more representatives of each seminary to plan and carry out conferences and all other regional responsibilities.
- 3) An annual North American Student Assembly to plan general program, composed of one representative from each seminary.
- 4) The Interseminary Committee, composed of representatives from the sponsoring agencies, representatives from the cooperating agencies and representatives from the North American Student Assembly, chosen to insure regional representation as fully as possible.

APPENDIX VI

Excerpts from a sermon delivered by the Very Rev. Alexander C. Zabriskie, Dean of the Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Va. before the North American Interseminary Conference at Miami University, Miami, Ohio, on June 17, 1947.

PART IV

I spoke last week, when we were meditating on "Give us this day our daily bread" of the sin and shame of the division of the Church, symbolized by the inability of members of all branches of the Church to commune together at the Lord's Table. The Lord's Table which He intended to be the focus of the unity of His disciples has become the symbol of disunion, and that is a scandal and a sin. That sin of the Churches is visible here.

The Executive Committee has received in the past few days many requests for a conference Communion service. Last night they asked me to say that when this conference was projected three years ago, in each geographical area of the Interseminary Movement a committee of students was enlisted to plan for it. Each of those committees was asked its judgment on whether there should be a conference Communion service. After wrestling with the problems involved for two years, every student committee replied, No: the possible losses would exceed the gain. Since there are those churches whose discipline will not permit its members to participate in a communion with the members of other churches, it would be unwise to have a service which would embarrass them, and might also be a cause of self-righteousness to those who did participate. The Executive Committee, after diligent study of all sides of the question, ratified the views of the sub-committees and decided that there should not be a service of the Lord's Supper as part of the conference program.

I was not a member of the committee and perhaps may take the liberty of saying that I deeply regret that decision, but regret even more the conditions which made it seem wise. That a group of Christians, gathered for the express purpose of studying and planning for the reunion of the Christian churches should be unable to join together in the Sacrament He instituted, is to me nothing short of intolerable. It is a measure of the sinfulness of churchmen. But since the committee had given assurances in advance that there would be no such conference Communion Service, of course they had to stick by their word. No other course was open to them, and we must acquiesce in it.

What shall we do about it? Shall we go away irritated, embittered, frustrated? That would be to fly from one sin into another equally serious sin—the sin of despair and uncharity. Also, to do so would result in our taking a similar attitude when we find it impossible for all the

churches of the city wherein we minister to join together at the Lord's Table, and thereby destroy our ecumenical effectiveness.

I speak as a member of the Protestant wing of the Episcopal Church and as a member of a diocese in which, by action of its Bishop and legislative body, Episcopal clergymen invite to the Lord's Table members of other churches who happen to be in our congregations. From that perspective I think that the action of our conference committee can be of great value, *if we will make it so*.

I hope every person here will do the following things.

1. Let us each engage in a sincere act of repentance for the sins of his own church which have contributed to this state of affairs. For God's sake, don't repent self-righteously the sins of other churches. To do that is spiritually devastating for you. Think whether *your* church is not guilty of one or more of the following things which contribute to the disunion of Christendom and are keeping us from joining together at the Lord's Table:—

- a) Setting human interpretations of the Sacrament above the Lord's command 'Do this in remembrance of me';
- b) Prizing the things which make you different from other churches just because they make you different and therefore enable you to feel a bit better than the common run of Christians;
- c) Magnifying difference in doctrine and practice lest you lose the excuse for going on in the traditional ways to which you are accustomed and which you would dislike to give up;
- d) Feeling irritated because of unjustifiable affronts given your church by another at some time in the past, and therefore wanting to assert continually that you are just as good as, or better than, it;
- e) Sheer inertia and the habit of keeping apart;
- f) Social differences from the church across the tracks;
- g) The desire of office holders to have their positions perpetuated;
- h) Fear of what may happen if you venture on new paths.

I could lengthen the list of human sins which to some extent pervade *every* church represented here. My own church is guilty on many of these counts. You must speak for yours, not I. Let us try to realize our own church's guilt, and realize that it is *our own personal* guilt, for all of us share in the responsibility for the sins of the groups to which we belong. Repentance is the first step toward amendment.

2. Let us try as hard as we can to understand and appreciate the honest convictions others hold as to our Lord's intent. For there are churches which *honestly* think that they have been called to bear witness to certain truths, and that their witness would be vitiated if they gave up the separateness these distinctive doctrines and practices entail

until those have been appropriated by others. The unity worth striving for is one which conserves the spiritual heritage of the various churches. The faith of Christ is not infinitely above the ability of any individual to grasp, but above any one branch of the Church; and we shall all attain to the truth not by each group's suppressing what is alien to others, but by each group's witnessing to what it has learned till God shows how they can be reconciled. To understand others demands patience, humility and *very hard study*. Read the theology of other traditions and read it not to criticize but to learn.

3. Repentance will also entail our doing our utmost to discover how these varying convictions can be harmonized. You may well find the differences are at bottom verbal. (I have served for nine years on the Episcopal Church's commission which has been holding conversations with a like group from the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., looking forward toward organic union. We have not yet succeeded in finding a method acceptable to a considerable majority of both churches by which to unite them. But both groups have been astonished and delighted to learn that some of the views of the other church which at first we regarded as impossible were really the same thing we stood for but expressed in different language.) It may be that to some of you here God will show how the convictions to which your church bears witness can be harmonized with, and enriched by, the convictions characteristic of some other communion. But I think the likelihood of His so using you depends on the amount of work you do, as well as on your agonizing and praying over the divisions that rend the whole of Christianity.

4. Repentance will entail our trying to find ways in the local parish level of which your congregation and those of other convictions can work and worship together; and don't be discouraged if either your own people, or the minister and people of the other churches, are irresponsive. Long habits of isolation are not overcome in a day. It may be only by infinite patience and perseverance that you can carry through any most simple cooperation and common worship. But also, it is only as people at the grass roots level understand each other better by worshiping and working together that unions can be achieved which will really stick.

5. Finally, let us recall that the ecumenical movement aims, and must aim, not only for the recovery of the Church's unity but also for its holiness. In John 17 our Lord is recorded as having prayed consecutively 'Sanctify them in the Truth: Thy word is Truth', and 'that they all may be one, as thou, Father art in me and I in thee.' As the churches grow in holiness—and that means that as you and I and the other people who compose the churches bring our lives by spiritual discipline increasingly under the sway of the Spirit so that He may produce in our lives the fruits of love, joy, patience, and the wisdom

that is from above—as the churches grow in holiness, they will be able to find ways and means to overcome the sin-caused barriers that divide them.

The Interseminary Movement can become a great factor for the unity of the Church as those of us who are involved in it take on our consciences and minds the sin of division and separation at the Lord's Table, *if* we give in mutual understanding, *if* we work at discovering ways for achieving ever deepening unity, *if* we develop the ecumenical movement at the grass roots, *if* we keep ourselves within the control of God's Spirit. If, if . . . if.

APPENDIX VII

Prayer offered at opening of final session of the conference by Robert S. Bilheimer as corporate act of contrition for the sin of division which made the conference unable to share in a service of corporate communion.

O Thou great God of all mankind, Thou who dost rule all our thoughts and work, Thou almighty Father of us all, we come to Thee in humble repentance. Thou alone knowest the extent and depth of our sinful ways; but we acknowledge that before Thee we are as nothing, our thoughts and deeds far from Thy love. We have dedicated ourselves to Thee, but our passion has cooled; we have believed Thy word, but our faith has grown weak; we have grasped Thy purpose, but our vision has dimmed. We would be servants of Thine, O Father, but rebellion springs up in our hearts and we appeal for Thy mercy.

O God, Thou who art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thou who hast brought the Church into being and who dost sustain it, we confess before Thee the sins of the Church. As its appointed servants we know too well the failings of the congregations and the churches in which we live. In the face of a world which knows Thee not, we have withheld Thy Gospel, so that men do not know Thee. Injustice has not aroused our conscience, but we have allowed suffering and oppression to go unchallenged and uncorrected. Within our body, O God, we have been separated and broken. Controversies of doctrine and divisions in worship do plague our souls and weaken our unity.

Father, once again we repent, for once again we have not been able to meet at Thy holy table. Hear our prayer, O God, and hear also our resolve: for in repentance we pledge ourselves to prayerful seeking of Thy way in this matter; to humble understanding of the convictions of others; to rigorous examination of our own positions; and above all to Thine all embracing love, which in spite of all our ways, binds us close together.

Father in Heaven, to Whom belongs all honor and glory, we pray also in thanksgiving. For unto Thee is all praise; in Thy being is all power and goodness; in Thy will is all love. Thou, O God, art all in all. We know that Thou art always present, but here Thou hast been pleased to make known Thy presence to us and to touch our lives. We thank Thee, O God, and invoke Thy spirit that it may move with power as we seek to rededicate our lives to Thee, and as we presently shall go forth from this place.

We pray in the name of Thy Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen

